

How Canada Looks After Men Who Fight Her Battles

Sent Forward Well Equipped, with Everything Possible Done to Ensure Health—Provision Made for Those They Leave Behind and For the Men Themselves When They Have Returned After Doing Their Bit

Ottawa, Nov. 26.—Is a little shack at La Crosse, which is somewhere in the Far North of the Great West as Canadian geography goes, there lives a Scotch-Canadian woman whose only companion is a daughter fourteen years old. These two recently returned to a new cheerful home from Saskatoon, where they had come to bid farewell to the youngest son of the family, a lad of seventeen, who was starting to the front with the Forty-fourth regiment.

The journey to Saskatoon from La Crosse represented eighteen hundred miles of travel—by canoe, by overland trail, some by railway. The old mother and the young sister made it bravely, though their hearts were heavy, for the lad, with whom they were able to have only a few minutes' conversation before he had to leave, is the last of four sons and brothers. The oldest went with Canada's first contingent, "somewhere in France," they met death. The youngest son would go. He must avenge his brother's death.

The memory of her four boys, the consciousness that none has given more than she to Canada and the Empire, for she has given her all, a Victoria Cross awarded to the eldest son which was awaiting her at Saskatoon, to tell her that the Empire does not regard her sacrifice as in vain—these are one mother's proudest possessions, to be nursed to her heart so long as life remains.

It is war, to sons the raking and the giving of their lives, to mothers the sacrifice of all that is dearer than life itself. I am glad I did not see the parting of this mother and her only remaining son at Saskatoon. Some of these partings I have seen and want no more. It is not good to witness the rending of a mother's heartstrings. It is good, however, to forget together with the sons who have come back and listen to their tales of experience as I did at the Overseas Club, at Quebec. Even when there is an arm missing or a leg, even if an occasional hacking cough tells of the deadly gas or a limp explains its owner's name on the casualty lists, always the spirit within is free.

Clearing House For Invalidated Soldiers
The Overseas Club is a sort of clearing house for the men invalidated home. It is an organization of prominent business men who have placed at the disposal of the returned soldiers who are landed at Quebec a large clubroom where they may gather during the time they remain in that city pending the arrival of formal discharge papers. The large room is festooned with flags, and at one end is something that looks suspiciously like a bar. Each evening there is plenty to eat, "soft" drinks for those who choose, beer, boy scouts do the waiting, a piano to pound, other music when they want it—mostly they are left to their own devices, which they appreciate. In other words, there is nothing to make them feel that they are being either policed or "mollycoddled," nothing to destroy the feeling that this club is their own. Every city had town in the Dominion has its Klubb Club to welcome its own upon his return and do for him. The Overseas Club simply fills the gap "in between." With these clubs, with its patriotic fund, with its various organizations to find and preferred positions in civil life that returned soldiers can fill and with its system of government pensions Canada is taking hold of its "veteran" problem in a way that shows understanding of its probable magnitude and full appreciation of the men who have risked and suffered.

There is nothing to it, nothing; in the open they are done, just like so many lambs bleating at being driven to slaughter!" The "Tipperary" chorus had died down and conversation was once more possible. I had asked a blue eyed, fair skinned lad of twenty-two, from the left arm of whose coat their peeped a black hand that told its own story of amputation, what he thought of the German as a man to man fighting man. "Nothing to it," he added, "contemptuously. They had it on us at first with their artillery and their gas, but when it came to the close work one Canadian is as good as any five of them. They had to be driven in by their officers—I wish I could reproduce the scene. "We went through them when the time came like a bunch of professionals go through a lot of football dubs. Honestly, I saw some of them crying like babies. They had caught us, too, half a company that got in between two of the lines, and we had to cut our way through. They had us outnumbered at least ten, perhaps twenty to one, but we got through. Of course there weren't many of us left, but we got through. Stories of German infantrymen beaten and routed and forced at pistol point by their officers before they would "stand the gaff" were told on all sides. There were stories, too, of gunners found dead at German machine guns, chained and padlocked to the guns, not trusted to serve them as brave men would, but made prisoner by their officers and doomed to a captive's death. Again, of the infantry, that they came always in close

brought into the camp, not developed in it. I asked about preventive inoculation only to discover that this is a subject the authorities do not discuss. The reason was not difficult to discover. The British army is the only army in which the taking of the typhoid serum is not obligatory; theoretically, therefore, it is not obligatory in the army of Canada. But everybody undergoes the inoculation. The answer is obvious—while there is no compulsion there is such persuasion as may be necessary, and the statistics of the camps, showing what is practically absolute freedom from the dread disease, tell the rest.

Liberal provision has been made for pensions for wounded and disabled soldiers and for widows' and dependent children of soldiers killed. The widow of a private receives \$22 a month and \$5 a month for each dependent child; the widow of a brigadier general \$100 a month, with \$10 a month for each child—the allowance for widows of non-commissioned and commissioned officers being graded between these two amounts. For example, the widow of a captain receives \$45 a month, with \$7 a month for each child. Four degrees of injury are recognized in the law making provision for the wounded. The first applies to those totally incapacitated or those who have received or illness contracted in action, in the second class are those totally incapacitated while on active service during drill or training or other duty, also those rendered "materially incapable" in action or in the presence of the enemy, the third class includes those rendered "materially incapable" while on active service, but not at the front, and those "in a small degree incapable" from wounds or ill-

ness in action; the fourth class takes in the "small degree" incapacities who were rendered in active duty, not in action or the presence of the enemy. The rates are graded between—For a private, first degree, \$264; second degree, \$192; third degree, \$132; fourth degree, \$78; and for a brigadier general, first degree, \$3,100; second degree, \$1,620; third degree, \$1,650; fourth degree, \$695.

It is through the Patriotic Fund, supported by popular contributions in all parts of the Dominion and administered by leading professional and business men with practically no cost to the fund itself, that the greatest work for the men who return and those at the front is now being done. Primarily the fund takes care of persons dependent upon the men who have joined the colors. This was its first purpose. Not much has as yet had to be done for the men who have returned, but something was needed to relieve distress due to unemployment, and this has been done. Subscriptions to the fund have been most liberal, its total running into the millions. The administrators of the fund in different centres of population are devoting their energies also to the problem of finding proper employment for returned soldiers in the mills, as they can do. The end will doubtless be a preferred "veterans" class in the civil service.

An interesting phase of this relief work was the setting aside by practically every farmer in the West and by many in other parts of the Dominion of a "patriotic acre." The proceeds from the production of that acre are to go to the Patriotic Fund. Winnipeg is headquarters of this "patriotic acre" movement. I was told there that it was too early to estimate the results, but it was believed every farmer in the wheat belt had set aside his acre for the cause and that the amount realized would run high.

In addition to the giving that goes into these funds there is that for the Red Cross. The response to the needs of this organization has been liberal, despite an occasional blunder. One of these, more laughable than serious, was the selection of Trafalgar Day as Red Cross Day throughout the Dominion. It went all right in those por-

tions of Canada where England is spoken, but when the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec received his notice from Ottawa he managed some way to "lose" it until after Trafalgar Day had been duly celebrated. Then he designated another day for the Red Cross in Quebec, at the same time diplomatically suggesting to the higher authority at Ottawa that somebody ought to "brush up" on history to the extent at least of acquiring knowledge of just what Trafalgar Day celebrates and what Trafalgar was.

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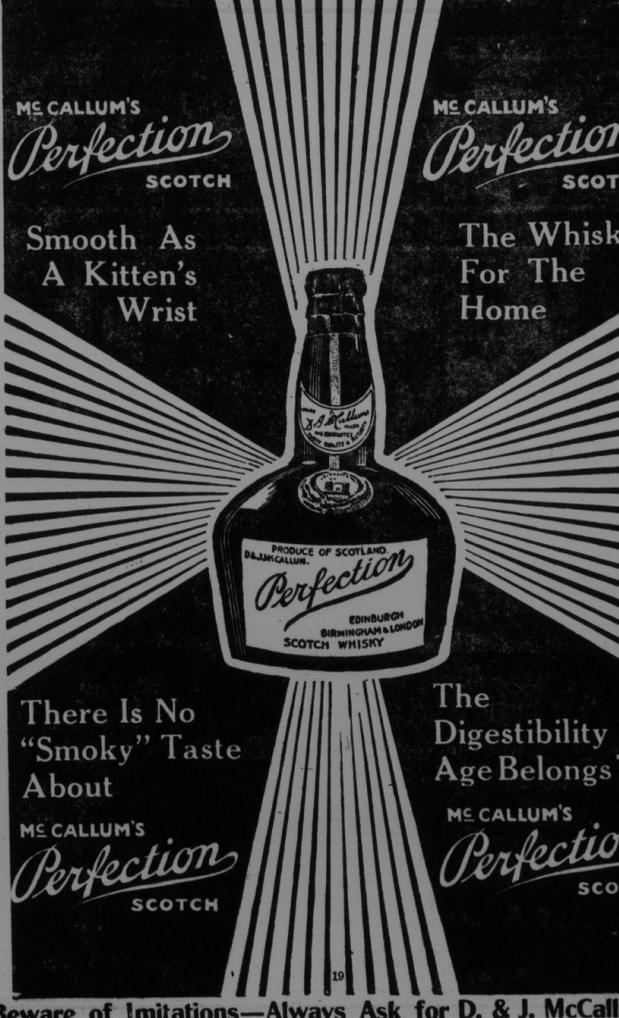
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