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Canadian Troops Won Their Spurs When Boers Were Routed at Paardeberg

Soldiers From the Dominion Fought Well and Brought Glory to Their Record in the Action of 23 Years Ago.

By DOUGLAS EPPES.

Specialty for The Canadian Press.)

Twenty-three years ago on Feb. 18, 1900, the Canadian Brigade staggered into Paardeberg Drift after a forced night march of 24 miles—the second in two days—and began the action which lasted nine days later on the anniversary of Majuba Day with the unconditional surrender of General Pretorius and 4,000 fighting Boers. Paardeberg, with its casualty list running to 1,800 marks, has been regarded by the British as the most important of the war wherein the battle dead numbered by their tens of thousands and yet to the Canadian its reputation has special significance in the fact that it was the first in which a unit raised and officered in this country battled alongside British infantry regiments over the defence of the Empire. The Canadian Brigade, which played the stellar role in effecting the downfall of the Boer, was almost entirely composed of men made up of a West of England Battalion of the Light Infantry; a Scottish Highlanders; a Midland Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry; and last but not least, the representatives of the land of the First Canadian Regiment. It had for its leader, Brig-Gen. L. Smith-Dorrien—the same who commanded the Canadian in those dark fateful days of 1914 in the historic retirement from Mons. As an organization, the brigade had no lengthy history, but it received its baptism of fire, in 1900. It had been only formed a few weeks before, its birthplace, being at Maple Leaf on the border of the Free State.

Chiefly because it was pinned tight by the deadly accuracy of the well-coordinated riflemen in river bed, dongas and trench.

KITCHENER URGED HASTE

Kitchener, who during Lord Roberts' absence in Kimberley was directing the operation, chafed at the delay. It had been his plan to snap up Cronje at one mouthful and then push on to Bloemfontein and the war before the startled burghers could rally from the Ladysmith area. But as the afternoon dragged on, he saw himself no nearer to the accomplishment of his purpose than he had been at dawn. He decided on action—swift and forceful. Summoning Colonel Aldworth, D.S.O., the officer commanding the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, who up to then had been on a kopje far south of the river, he directed him to take four of his companies, none of which had yet been blooded in the struggle, cross the river, and assault the position with the bayonet. Colonel Aldworth was charged with the task of communicating this decision to the troops on the south side of the Modder. The D.C.L.I. commander informed Colonel, now Major-General, Otter, who led the Canadians, of this order. It is not on record that Aldworth informed the Gordon's colonel, personally, though a sergeant of the Cornwalls was detained for this purpose. It was an impossible task. None knew it better than those entrusted with its fulfillment. Between them and that labyrinth of rifle pits and trenches and deep sandy dongas—some of them eighty feet in depth—intervened a level stretch of sun-scorched veldt as devoid of cover as a bald man's head. But they attempted it—those six companies of Canadian and four companies of Cornwalls. Cheerily they fixed their bayonets and started on that mad adventure.

BOER BULLETS.

As soon as the thin irregular line of khaki revealed itself over the protecting ridge, a furious holocaust of leaden hail beat upon it. On that on-rushing wave was concentrated the fire of 4,000 rifles in the hands of the best marksmen in the world—at 500 yards range. Smitten as though by a tempest of scorpions, the line was broken, reformed, pushed on again, broken once more, staggered on for another few score yards—and then lost its momentum, or more properly speaking was smashed. Colonel Aldworth was one of the first to fall. Hit in the ankle, he crawled on perhaps ten yards when he was

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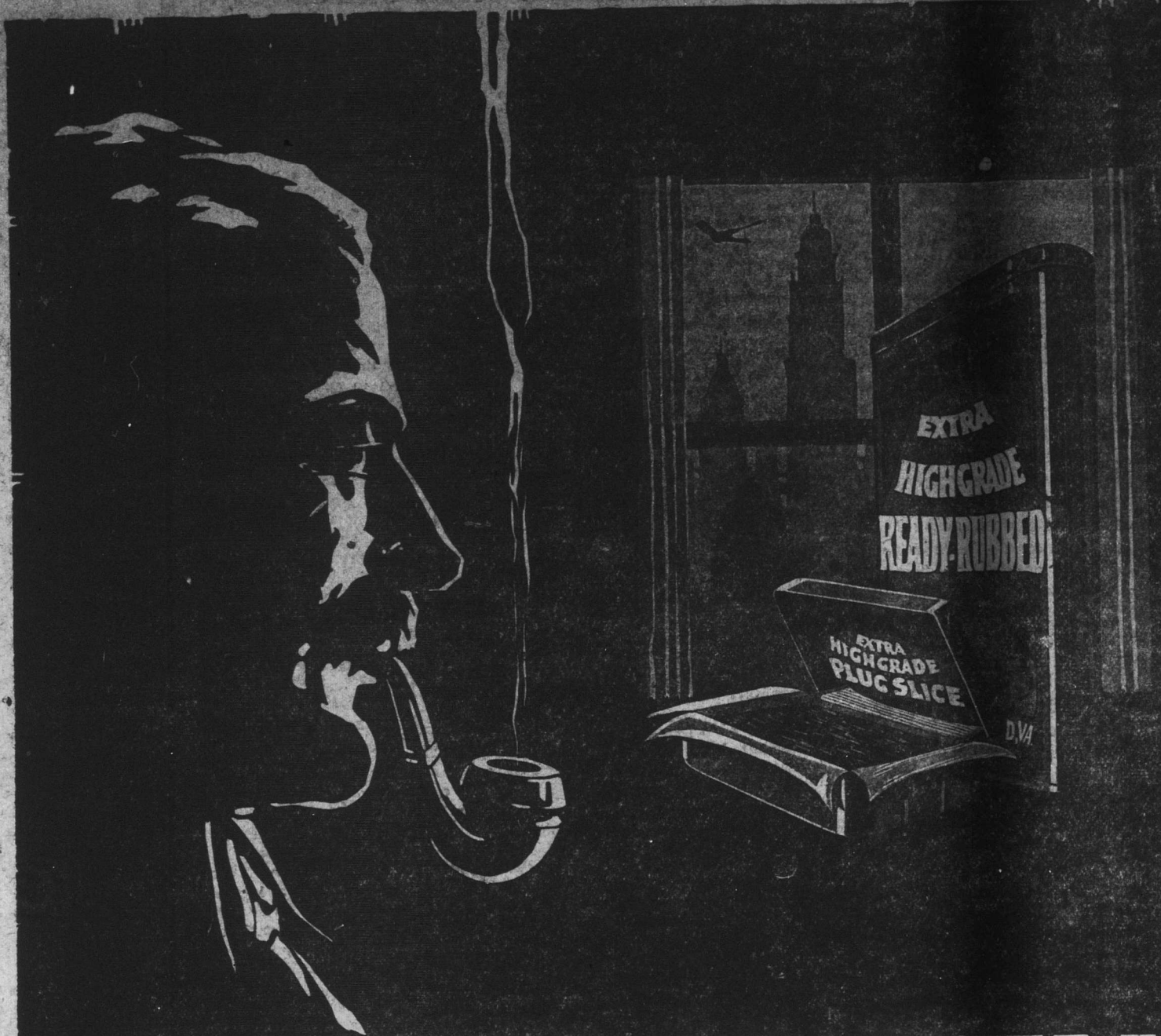
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struck again fatally. He died a full twenty yards ahead of his men. He was blamed, but wrongly, for initiating the order was not of his making; it came from Lord Kitchener. The Canadians suffered heavily. There was little or no cover, and to take shelter behind one of the anthills which here and there dotted the veldt a furious volley which invariably ended in the annihilation of the anthill and the death of the men behind it. Here was hit private—now Captain—James Kennedy of C. Company. Hit no less than eleven times four of his wounds being caused by explosive bullets. As a result of his experience, Captain Kennedy was known thereafter throughout the length and breadth of this country as the "Human Sieve." No one will dispute his right to the honourably earned title. Here also Lieutenant James Mason, now Colonel Mason, President and General Manager of the Home Bank, sustained severe wounds and earned his D.S.O. And here, also, though earlier in the day, Captain Arnold of Winnipeg received a mortal wound; and many another gallant soldier.

ON MAJUBA DAY.

The charge was delivered around five o'clock, and it was the last effort of that initial day's fighting. The rest of the story does not belong here—the stealthy, inexorable advance by trenching, the steady, but largely bloodless, by the artillery; the final assault by the Canadian Regiment which forced Cronje to his stubborn knees on the anniversary of Majuba, and forever wiped out that stain on British arms. Time has thinned the ranks of those whose baptism of fire dates back to the far-off days around Cronje's laager on the tree-fringed banks of the Modder. Some set forth in the last great adventure in the fields of Flanders and never returned. Others have answered the summons of the Last Post in their own homes and now sleep in the graves of a peaceful Canadian community. Still others have vanished from ken, and there is no record of their passing.



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Draws Censure of Colorado House.

DENVER, Col. Feb. 8.—The Colorado House of Representatives adopted today a resolution of censure, expressing displeasure and disagreement with the sentiments expressed

in the opening prayer of Chaplain J. R. Kader.

Parts of the prayer which drew fire were: "Our courts are corrupt; God has been expelled from our churches; our pulpits are filled with essayists; our boys and girls are going to the dogs; our laboring men are going to work with empty pails, while our farmers starve and the middlemen wax fat on exorbitant prices; * * * our banks are bursting with money."

The chaplain began with the exclamation, "Oh, Lord, how long is

this condition to endure?" and ended with a supplication that the Deity guide the lawmakers to the end that "greed might be overcome, and justice done among men."

Members of the House voiced disagreement with the prayer soon after its conclusion. Following a period of heated debate, it was decided that the subject be considered in executive session. Several hours' consideration in secret resulted in support of the resolution, which was ordered to be printed in the House Journal. A committee was appointed to inform the chaplain of the action taken.

Representative Cook, a former minister, opened debate on the prayer with the statement that he was surprised at the wording.

"I do not believe that the Almighty is especially concerned by these little verbal, wireless bulletins with which our chaplain is annoying Him," he said.

Cures for Insomnia.

Counting sheep as a cure for insomnia was described as "ridiculous" by Dr. Hildred Carfill of Westminster Hospital and the West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases, in a lecture on "Hysteria and Mental Hygiene." "The most useless treatment of all," he said, "is to tell the patient to think of nothing; it is uncommonly difficult to think of nothing. It is better to lie relaxed and to repeat with each breath the word 'sleepy' in a regular and monotonous manner." Reading in bed he described as inadvisable under any circumstances. Many people hold that a good long walk before bed time is a good remedy, while others again recommend a visit to the theatre or music hall, the changing scenes of which tire the eyes and induce a good night's sleep. Dozing in the daytime encourages sleeplessness at night as the brain and body receive only fitful rests which eventually become chronic.

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