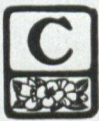


OUR BIRTHDAY.

JANUARY 4th, 1915.



CHRISTMAS is over. The New Year is ushered in 'midst the cannonading of the rival armies, and hard upon the first of the New Year comes the birthday of the Battalion.

A year ago, on January 4, permission was granted for the formation of the 49th Battalion. On the publication of this news in Edmonton, backed by the signature of our C.O., people sat up and took notice. The old armouries were the scene of a regular pit queue, men hustled each other in their endeavours to be the first to enlist, and those of the 19th who were on guard were kept busy answering questions as well as keeping what order was necessary among the good-natured crowd awaiting their turn to go to the help of the Motherland.

Nine o'clock sees everyone busy with pen and paper. Attestation forms were much in evidence, ink flew on every side, and the honour of being the first man to actually enlist in the Battalion was Sergeant Clifford Wright, and after him the others came in the order as near as possible that their numbers run, Sergeant Girvin being No. 1. And so the merry crowd filed in, divesting themselves of sundry articles of clothing preparatory to that dreaded ordeal "the physical examination"; but such was the stamina of the boys that very few came down the stairs knowing that the 49th was not to be their battalion.

The ordeal over, partially dressed and hanging on to the blue attestation papers, each vies with the other to see who should be the first to further worry the much-worried score or so of orderlies who range each side of the tables set up in the orderly room. Papers filled in, and smiles radiating from every face, the final swearing-in by Major

Weaver made us all "Soldiers of the Dominion"—eh, and how we puffed out our chests as we swaggered down Jasper and cast supercilious glances at those not of the Great Army.

Next morning sharp at nine o'clock saw all the enlisted men standing at attention in their various platoons, answering the roll-call, a few rushing out of breath to answer theirs at the last moment, hoping that they were in time to miss the absentee report. Yes, and how grateful we are that our sergeants were lenient with us and knew what it was to turn out of a good warm bed when the frost king held sway.

With roll-call over, and sometimes a few words from the C.O., we march away to the Parliament buildings, where we were allowed to pull aside the veil and learn for ourselves the mysteries of "Form Fours," "Right Form," and all the other forms that man is heir to, and, be it said, that sometimes the poor instructors were not always certain of themselves; and many were the funny incidents that took place on those old stamping grounds.

Memory goes back to those days just a year ago when in snow inches deep we determined to become soldiers or for ever hold our peace—who would not just for the space of a few hours, be they never so short, hie themselves back to the old city and see the grounds of their first endeavours, and, arm-in-arm with some friend, recount the many pleasures and some few trials there encountered?

Then time changes, and, the snow melting, we see ourselves housed in the Exhibition grounds, which had by our own men been made into barracks to house Edmontonian soldiers. There uniform is served out, rifles arrive, equipment is juggled with, and we