

THE RUM CONTROVERSY

(The controversy whether it is advisable to issue rum to the troops or not has been raging violently in the press. At last dug-out journalism has been obliged to fall into line, and accordingly we print the following letters which give the points of view of widely differing parties. We dissociate ourselves entirely from the opinions herein expressed, and leave them to stand on their own merits without comment.—Editor.)

Horatio Bottomley writes :

"Let the boys their rum ! Shame on the cranks who seek to make capital out of our absorption in a World War by introducing freak legislation which they well know does not represent the real feeling of the country.

"From time immemorial the British soldier—of whom we are all justly proud—has drunk rum whenever procurable. I, for one, consider him all the better for it. Let those who decry its use endure for one day the dangers and hardships of our noble fellows in the trenches. I warrant they will change their tune.

"In any case as the War cannot possibly continue for more than ten days I fail to see that this outcry against the use of rum is either expedient or justified.

"In my next weeks issue of "John Bull" I shall settle this matter for all time".

The Rev. Augustus Banks writes :

"I deeply deplore the use of such a potent agent of evil as rum in the ranks of our army composed as it is of so many youths — one might almost call them boys — on the very threshold of life, as it were.

"I am by conviction in favour of the substitution of cocoa. Cocoa is the true stimulant. It warms and invigorates, and never by any chance lures one to harmful overindulgence. Failing that, pea-soup properly prepared is an ideal drink under trying weather conditions. I myself have tested it thoroughly when camping by the sea-side, and can testify to its efficacy.

"My parishioners, who were at one time addicted to the use of alcoholic stimulants to an appalling degree, are now largely in favour of temperance beverages which are strengthening and healthful. This happy result, I rejoice to say, has been partially brought about by my own precept and example".

"I trust our military leaders may be induced to stop this pernicious practice ere the love for the Demon Rum becomes ineradicably rooted in the breasts of our young manhood".

Pte. M. O'Brien writes :

"Take away th'rum an' a fellah might as well be a civvy for all the fun he'll get out of the war. Besides, what kind of a soldier does he make that turns up his nose at a snort o' S.R.D.? I'll tell ye ; when it comes to a dirrty bit o' bombin', or maybe a turrrn wid the bay'nit, he ain't there, that's all ! Take it from me if ye want the war won give the throops their rum regular an' often. That's me opinion !"

The Company Commander writes :

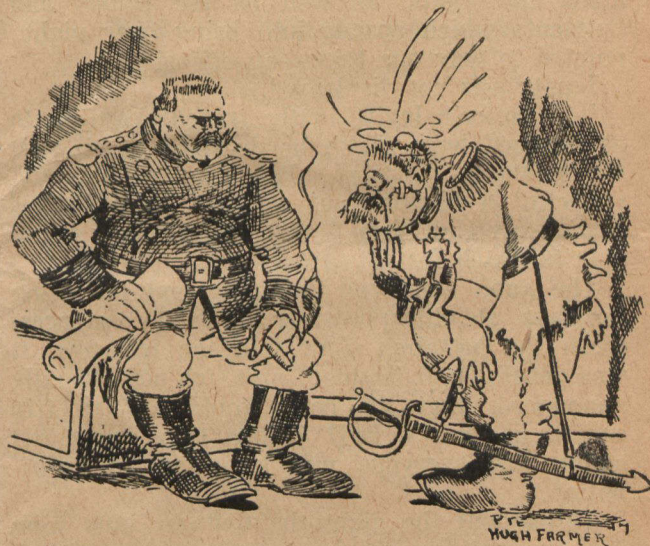
"The men are wonderfully keen on their rum issue. Send for a working party and you wait half the night for them, but just whisper "rum" and the whole company's treading on one another's heels to get near the jar. Most extraordinary ! Can't fathom it. So long as I get my peg of Scotch with decent regularity I never care if I see the stuff myself"

The Company Sergeant-Major writes :

"I like to see the boys get a full issue of rum whenever possible. Of course it can't always be done, but the army system is so good that I've rarely had to go without mine"

Lce. Cpl. Eustace Finlay-Jameson writes :

"I never could stomach rum before the war, but I really enjoy it now. When a fellow's chilled to the bone and half dead from want of sleep along about "Stand down", and everyone's grey-faced and morose, it's wonderful how one's rum issue warms one up and makes one look on the bright side of things".



Hindenburg (to badly battered souvenir from Hill 70):
"What? Fired 200,000 shells, used gas, liquid fire, and failed to take the position! Who were you up against!"
German General: "Der Canadians!"

APPLE BLOSSOM

In the orchard where I met you
'Mid the tender pink and white
Tiny voices whispered to me,
Fairy magic gave me sight,
And I stepped from out the shadows
Into light.

Sunshine played on branch and blossom
Setting all the world aglow,
Trickling 'tween the dainty leaflets,
Forming flakes of golden snow ;
Then it was that Cupid, laughing,
Bent his bow

By the scented wall we wandered
When the sunset hour was nigh,
Souls aflame with gentle gladness,
Hearts athrob with hope set high,
In our love all else forgetting,
You and I.