

The Work of the Y.M.C.A.

In the recent report of the work of the Canadian Y.M.C.A. in the field there is much of interest both to the soldier and to the folks at home. Though the report gives only a brief outline of the work accomplished, it shows to what extent the Y.M.C.A. has overcome the many difficulties and obstacles met with in the course of their activities, and it speaks volumes for the initiative and energy of the officers and men comprising the staff of the organization in France and their ability to make the best of the least likely conditions.

The canteen service takes a prominent place among the different branches of the activities of the Association and this service is especially convenient when, owing to movements, the battalions and other units are unable to obtain supplies for their own canteens. During the period the Canadian Corps was engaged at the Somme the Y.M.C.A. and the Chaplains' Service canteens were practically the only places where soldiers could obtain anything at a reasonable price. Many of the canteens were operated twenty-four hours a day in order to keep up with the continual demand for cigarettes, chocolate, biscuits, tinned goods, etc. The policy of giving away free hot drinks and biscuits in the "forward dug-outs" was highly appreciated by thousands of soldiers returning from the front line. One incident, among others of a similar nature, may be mentioned here to illustrate the difficulties under which the work was carried on. A sufficient supply of water to meet the demand for hot drinks was at all times difficult to obtain. One night, when it was known that there would be a considerable number of troops returning from the front line early next morning after some heavy fighting, three of the officers themselves carried water a distance of three hundred yards in the pouring rain and through the sticky mud for four hours until they had a sufficient supply in to serve the men with hot drinks as they returned from the trenches in the morning. The extent of this section of the work may be realised by the fact that supplies to the value of 25,000 francs were distributed free to the troops while the Corps was at the Somme.

While the canteen service occupies such a predominant place in the work of the Y.M.C.A. the entertainment of

the troops is never neglected despite the difficulties which have at times to be overcome. On one occasion a village hall was secured as a place of entertainment, but of seating accommodation there was none, the hall being bare of furnishings of any kind. Transport was not available from the military authorities and the farmers in the vicinity were all busy hauling their grain. Finally, several farmers were induced, at a price, to hire their waggons in the early morning before the dew had dried in the fields, thus disposing of the transport difficulties. The seating problem was overcome by borrowing a number of empty petrol cases from a near by dump. Later, a moving-picture machine and engine were installed and the "Y" was once more able to provide entertainment for the soldiers and enable them to forget, for a time at least, the weariness of war. Many special concert parties are organized from time to time and, in addition, frequent impromptu concerts are arranged at the different centres, of which there are no less than forty in the area at present occupied by the Corps. Truly may it be said that, were it not for the activity and energy displayed by the Y.M.C.A., life in rest billets would be doubly monotonous for Canada's fighting men. In spite of the lack of any permanent establishment of transport or of men, the Canadian Y.M.C.A. has kept pace with the growth of the Canadian Army in the field until now it is a huge organization doing a work well worthy of the best traditions of the Young Men's Christian Association.

Our own brigade is especially fortunate in having such an energetic officer as Captain Fingland. Ever ready to lend a hand and of an exceptionally genial disposition, he makes friends everywhere. Captain Fingland succeeded Captain Forgie who is now senior Y.M.C.A. officer in another division.

From an Advertisement

"Compressed Tea Tablets for the trenches. Most convenient for our soldiers at the Front. To make a delicious cup of tea simply pour boiling water on two of the tablets and add sugar and milk to taste."

Very convenient and marvellously simple till you reach the point where you require to pour the boiling water and add the sugar and milk to taste.

An Awful "Eggsample"

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through a narrow trench there
passed,
A youth, who muttered, sad and sore,
"Eight eggs, O Lor'."

"That hen-fruit sure did look a treat,
Surrounded by fried potatoes sweet.
I'd have been all right if I'd stopped at
four.

"Eight eggs, O Lor'."

For days passed in the Front Line drear,
He'd thought of eggs with vision clear,
Of the splendid feed he'd have, encore.
"Eight eggs O Lor'."

But now before he goes to dine,
He'll have to take a number nine.
No more you'll hear him asking for,
"Eight eggs, O Lor'."

A moral then I wish to point.
If your "Tummy" you would not dis-
joint,
Don't hanker for a dozen, or
"Eight eggs, O Lor'."

—B.H.E.

The Last Straw

A new recruit for the Navy was brought before the commander of the naval barracks on a charge of insubordination. The Petty Officer explained that the man had resisted when they took him to the swimming baths for the first lesson in the art of natation.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" enquired the Commandant. "Well, sir, it's like this 'ere. I've only been in the Navy for three days. The first day the doctor drew-ed six of my teeth out, the second day I was inoculated, an' this morn-ing the Petty Officer comes along to me an' he says: 'Come on, you pup, we're a-goin' ter drown yer.'"

DECORATIONS

The following list of decorations should have been included in the list on page 2.

Military Cross

Lieut. H. N. Pitche.
Lieut. S. J. Reeves.
Lieut. M. P. Neilly.

D. C. M.

Sergt. A. R. Snow.