

# The Western Scot

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2nd, 1916

## WILLINGNESS

How much more can be accomplished every day if we bring to our appointed tasks genuine willingness of spirit. Every day now counts tremendously with us. At most it can only be a few weeks until we are ordered on the first leg of our journey towards the Great Objective, the objective towards which we have all been laboring through the long arduous months of training routine. None of us has turned his back on peaceful pursuits and the home life for monetary considerations. We are all actuated by the deep-rooted sense of a duty to do, that has been the moving force of the splendid army the British Empire has fielded since August, 1914. Therefore, it is the more necessary that every man, be he commissioned officer, non-commissioned officer or private, bring to each day's work a full battery of willingness—willingness to learn, willingness to do, completely and cheerfully and ably, whatever the day brings to him.

For many weeks now the weather has interfered with the development of training in accordance with the programme drawn up by our senior officers. The alternative is often deadly dull routine, hard to "stick" cheerfully; but we should bear in mind that even in the dullest of routine there is something to be learned, something that will prove valuable to us in the days of serious work that are to come.

## ROOM FOR A FEW MORE

It will be good news to many men in this Battalion who have eligible friends, to learn that there is room now—owing to "casualties" (the weeding-out process, etc.), for thirty or so good recruits. This will afford an opportunity for a few men who can measure up to "Western Scot" standard of physical fitness and fighting ability, to get away with an organization that has been developed carefully along new lines, and one that already has been the recipient of most favorable comment by the authorities. The "Western Scots" will move soon, very soon in fact. The time for training new men is short and only very promising material will be accepted. If you have friends whom you desire to have come with us to the Front, get them lined up at once. But remember, we want "hand-picked" men.

## AS TO RANKS AND RANKERS

Of all the senseless survivals of ante-bellum official snobbery the worst is the thoughtless inclination now and again manifest even at this stage of the game to look askance at officers taken from the ranks. We pioneers of the West, who have been brought up to judge a man more by his work than the cut of his trousers or the set of his tie, have, of course, not had the same opportunity of judging the relation between cause and effect in their bearing on the prejudice which was undoubtedly shown in the case of "rankers" in the British Army. And to the snob-mind of the pink-tea Johnnies who not so many moons ago to a very large extent set the standard of efficiency among Army officers the term "ranker" was the conclusive argument against the interloper, and, irrespective of his ability, was sufficient to damn him beyond redemption. With the advent of the war, and after a twelve-month of but indifferent "staffcraft," of necessity the ranks, always prolific of the highest efficiency, were much more in favor as a recruiting ground for capable leaders, but even yet, in the British Army, thanks to a silly but deep-seated idea that Jack never may be as capable as his master, a "ranker" is still a ranker. But that such a silly prejudice should even be thought of, let alone put into words, in this part of the world, is, indeed, passing strange. Our own hero, General Currie, himself is a living rebuke to such foolish prejudices. General Currie first saw service in the ranks of No. 1 Company of the 5th Artillery at a time when the second in command of the regiment was an officer who himself had served in the ranks. And General Currie's successor in the command, Lt.-Col. W. N. Winsby, now nearing the front in command of the 47th Battalion, was also a "ranker" of the 5th Regiment, as was also the late Lt.-Col. Ross Monro, another former commanding officer of that Battalion. In fact, it was the rule and not the exception in that corps to take the officers from the ranks, and it is safe to say that the history of the Fifth Regiment shows that for a volunteer corps it is in point of efficiency second to

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none in the British Empire. And we think we can honor its present capable commander, Lt.-Col. Angus, by stating that he, too, had served in the ranks of another corps. In business life—and God knows some simple business principles need infusing into some other prominent walks of life—the recognition of efficiency is promotion, and very little heed is paid to the silly snobbery that, in its own silly way, frowns on commercial success because the successful one is not of "our set."

As stated, it is of course to be expected that the centuries-old senseless prejudice against "rankers" may in some quarters have outlived even the acid test of the past eighteen months in the regular army, but this prejudice has no place in Canada, and least of all out here in the West. That it is the local thoughtless expression of a species of snobbery that worships everything, both good and bad, in things "at home" is beyond a doubt. But Westerners should be above such senseless ideas. In the ranks at the present day the man of character, as well as of education, is greatly in the majority, and this has always been the case in this broad Dominion.