

CANADA'S RETURNED HEROES

WHEN his duties as Canada's war lord give him unlimited opportunity to appear in the spectacular limelight of public display, with bands playing, people cheering and a whole Empire gazing with admiration, Major-General Sir Sam Hughes is usually to be found on the job as personal director, clad in his bravest regimentals, and with a special place reserved for the newspaper correspondents. Every little detail of arrangement is then worthy of his own special attention. When the drab side of the results of War requires attention, Sir Sam is probably too busily engaged otherwise to apply his much advertised efficiency methods. The thought is prompted by repeated reports and charges, which refuse to down even in the face of vague official denials, that Canadian soldiers, returned from the front because wounds and sickness have rendered them unfit for further service, have received anything but proper treatment from the time they leave English hospitals until they are finally discharged to their homes in Canada.

Wounded Men in the Steerage.

Many months ago when the first Canadian wounded returned home, the Toronto Telegram drew public attention to the fact that they came across the Atlantic in the steerage, and asked pointedly if this was the best that the Government and people of Canada could do for them. The hint apparently went unheeded. **Since Canadian wounded have in the past two months begun to return in their scores and hundreds on every ship from England, the protests against the treatment they have been subjected to has grown in volume until it has become a disgrace and a humiliation to the people of Canada. Unfortunately it must also have had its effect on recruiting.**

Colonist Cars and Bare Boards.

It was on November 23rd that the true state of affairs came to public knowledge with shocking directness when Toronto newspapers printed verbatim the comment of Lieut-Col. F. W. Marlow, Director of Medical Services in the Militia Department after his experiences with a large number of men just returned from English hospitals. He was reported as saying:

"I feel that I owe these men an apology for the kind of conveyance in which they were brought here—colonist cars with bare boards. We had to hurry around at Quebec and get some straw mattresses and blankets for the cars. I don't mind criticizing the Government or anybody else in a matter like this. These cars were the rolling stock of a Government railroad. As a medical officer I will not stand for that sort of treatment of the men."

Sir Sam's Callous Comment.

Just here it may be noticed that when press correspondents brought the matter to the attention of Major-General Sir Sam Hughes at Ottawa, he replied with characteristic nonchalance that the complaint came from "one or two unimportant

people in Toronto," and proceeded to put the blame for the complaints on "a few of the men who are no good, who will sell their overcoats and then appeal to some soft-hearted committee of charity and abuse the Government."

Startling Charges at Montreal.

It was on the same day that Sir Sam gave vent to this cynical condemnation of wounded Canadian soldiers that the Montreal Star, a staunch Conservative organ, printed a three-column article based on interviews with wounded men who had just arrived at Montreal from Quebec. These men complained of:—

Scanty and irregular meals at the Discharge Depot, Quebec.

That they received no money for over a week after reaching Quebec, during which they were quite penniless.

That they were kept at Quebec in quarters in which the beds were dirty and infested with vermin.

That on the trip by train from Quebec to Montreal they received nothing to eat from breakfast time until they arrived at Montreal after 7 P.M.

Sir Sam Hughes was at Toronto the next day and the story from Montreal was told to him. Again he repeated his callous and cynical insult to the wounded men. "Show me a grouching returned soldier and I will show you a man who has pawned his overcoat," Sir Sam is reported to have said.

At Winnipeg, as the result of rumors heard there as well as the complaints made in the east, the Manitoba Free Press made an investigation among the returned men. They were found to be reluctant to give information, and only men of undoubted worth and more than ordinary intelligence were quoted. In the hope that their experiences, if brought to public attention, might result in better treatment for men to follow them, these men gave the following information:

Kept from Friends and Relatives.

After leaving the hospital in England and getting into a convalescent home, the first shock the British-born Canadian soldier receives is to find that he is absolutely denied permission to visit friends or relatives in Great Britain. One case was cited in which a man whose wife and children had moved back to England was not allowed to go to them, but was forced to board a steamer to Canada, and on arrival at Quebec had to pay his own passage back to Liverpool in order to rejoin his family. Several cases of this kind were well authenticated.

Without Proper Winter Clothing.

On leaving England for Canada the men were not given proper warm clothing, although they were coming to Canada in winter.

At no time before arriving in Winnipeg were the men given a change of socks or underwear, and many arrived in bitter western weather so lightly clad that members of a public reception committee had to keep the men at the station while others