



CHAPTER I.

Early Experiences in Canada—The Spit, Comox, B.C.— The First of Many Moves.



HE official date for the mobilization of the 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, whose adventures in Canada, England, France and Belgium during the days of The Great War it is the object of this book to chronicle, is given as November 3rd, 1915, on which date authority was issued to Lieut.-Colonel John Weightman Warden, formerly of St. John's, N.B., but then of Vancouver, B.C., to raise a battalion for service overseas, this battalion to be raised in Northern British Columbia and to be styled the 102nd (Comox-Atlin) Overseas Battalion. A newspaper story, which may or may not have some foundation in fact, states that the inauguration of the unit was the outcome of a wager laid between Mr. H. Clements, M.P. for Comox-Atlin, and one of his colleagues in the Federal House, the latter having jestingly challenged him to produce a unit from his barren constituency. If there be any truth in the yarn it certainly affords an excellent example of the adage that from small beginnings great things do grow.

The officer to whom this commission was entrusted was a veteran of experience. A native of New Brunswick, he had enlisted in the Canadian Contingent at the time of the Great Boer War, exchanging later into the South African Constabulary and serving continuously in South Africa thereafter until March, 1906, when he returned to Canada. On his arrival he felt the call of the West and migrated to Vancouver where he engaged in the business of general broker and real estate dealer, satisfying his military propensities by first enlisting in the 6th (D.C.O.R.) Regiment and later, in May, 1911, taking out a commission in the same unit. Lt.-Col. Warden claims to be the first man in British Columbia, if not the first in the Dominion, to volunteer for service in the war just concluded, as he submitted his name to the Volunteer List on the very day on which Austria declared war on Serbia. However that may be, he crossed over with the First Contingent and as a captain in the 7th Battalion was