

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 1918

The Canadian Force At Home In France

Our Soldiers and the French Towns—The People and Some of the Customs

ARTICLE NO. 6.
By Lacey Amy, Special Correspondent
of The Evening Times with the
Canadian Forces in France.

With the Canadian Forces in France, July 8—in the beginning, when the code of nations was laid down, there was handed to the French people a mould from which they have produced several thousand towns, afterwards adding variety by the simple process of altering the slant of the streets and the architecture of the Hotel de Ville. You might drop a Canadian in any one of them, unless he tripped over a familiar cobblestone, he might locate the town anywhere from Poperinghe to Arras, with a range in depth of twenty-five miles or so from the fighting line. Which is about the extent of the Canadian soldier's knowledge of France and includes enough hundreds of towns to make the following description as indefinite in location as an item about a baseball game would be in Canada.

The French town about which the Canadian force is centred—rather pleased—has little distinctive from its fellow products of the common mould. It is so typical that a sketch of it should bring every mother in Canada over to France—if I can do it justice—to see what surrounds her boy so many months of the year.

Picture a spilling of uneven lines from a celestial balloon and you have the plan of the streets. The man who charted them must have been out late on a fete galante and have felt the necessity of an unqualified uncertainty of direction. His most convivial evening would never leave him at sea in the streets of a French town. Always there would be a twist ahead to fit into his course.

Having got that thoroughly in mind, one may add the houses. Once the street lines were laid down, builders came along with competitive sites of residence in mind (though seldom of plan) and pointed roughly to the location they desired. The size might not fit into the space, but such a trivial obstacle was overcome by jutting the corner into the already zigzag street line. It cut in so completely that the regulations that they were to observe were usually clean. I do not know whether that is their nature in peacetime, or because when the soldiers are in town they are bound by regulations to clean the streets themselves. To be sure the women and girls of the homes are out at 8 a. m. scrubbing the cobbles almost to the middle of the road. But the first half hour of traffic does all that. The only unshininess is the day's wash-up within doors. Whether it is a factory, a stable, a blacksmith shop, or a house, the scrubbing find outlet into the street, and the khaki street gang come along and see that they do not block the traffic. It is all a clean sort of dirt.

Another result of cobbles is that street sauntering is reduced to the minimum. It is too hard on shoe leather and ankles and muscles. That is why the soldiers favor rich soles to their shoes, so that they may cover a French street without feeling more than the larger unevennesses or falling between the stones. Not every lad temporarily missing is a prisoner of war.

The houses are quaint. There is a similarity of design, but no symmetry of line. Each house and store has its own walls and roof, its own height, its own finish and color, though the prevailing scheme is white. The roofs are always steep; and I am informed by the Canadian artists now attached temporarily to the force that this is artistic. It is at least effective—in France. One or two towns have the gable ends facing the street, like Arras. But usually the peak runs parallel with the street. A burglar has little chance of escape either by French roofs or French streets.

One grows accustomed to the peculiarities of the French civilian dress, but it still retains some novelty for me. Small girls dress normally enough, but the small boys wear large aprons with yokes buttoning down the back and reaching at a distance the garb of certain religious orders. The women vary as they do elsewhere, with quite as good an average. Just now the fit men are in French grey, which makes a slightly uniform. The trousers of the others are peculiar. They are loose at the top, ending at the ankle in a cuff. The volume of the top establishes the home and origin of the wearer. Some require a whole road to pass each other; others use patience and perform the feat on the sidewalks by turning sideways.

Everyone is kindly and pleasant-faced, despite the war. The children are full of life, but not rough or disturbing noisy and they to him with a camaraderie which makes a real pleasure of a rest camp.

When the mayor wishes to speak to his people he sends round a crier with a brass plate and a wooden mallet. At the clangor the people gather round and receive instructions. They may be a distribution of sugar at the town hall, or a warning to deliver in connection with the war. And like the boy with a new whistle, the crier does not stink his job.

Just now two of three stores are estimated or tea rooms or restaurants, some reserved for officers. There are no street names, and the only visible numbers have been put there by the military for billeting purposes. Many signs are in French and English. Any Canadian soldier in France learns enough French in a fortnight to prefer the French signs as a step in his education. By the way they flock to the stores I suspect they make purchases at times largely to extend their French vocabulary.

The news vendors announce themselves by horns, except when selling the London papers. These they shout with all the pride of English-speaking Frenchmen. In a certain French city I heard a score of young lads shouting the papers in true London accent—"popai! popai! sub!" And the speed of their wares is proof of the popularity of their wares and their English and French.

When the army comes into possession there are other offices besides street cleaning assumed by the military. At every corner where traffic crosses stand command for private or general. There is no confusion, and very little delay, though the corners are sharp, blind and narrow, and the passage of war impediments is ceaseless. The get-there policy that makes a road-hog of a man in Canada, and the give-and-take that induces almost incredible amenities

into the traffic of London, are unknown in the French town in the military areas. You take your place in the line as laid down by the unstriped arm of a simple private with a black band on his arm. It saves time, temper and rolling stock, and incorporates into the foreign flavor of strange streets and architecture and language the strong, visible arm of British law.

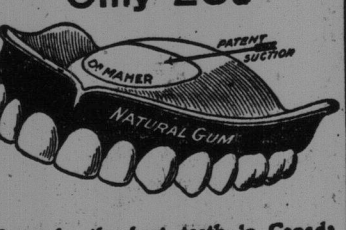
There are other signs of war in these towns. With the commencement of the futile German push in March the enemy opened a further demonstration of twenty miles of the fighting lines have been shelled with varying intensity. A few have been viciously knocked about, others subjected to the German idea of frightfulness as a peace incentive. To say that it has effected nothing of what can be heard the "ore-rump" of shells in almost every house bears a small sign with the information, "Cellar for 8," or perhaps as many as twenty or more, the location of immediate refuge and their capacity.

Yesterday there was a sale of salvage rescued from the edge of the German advance—outs, boxes of tinned goods. And the town women were there with their baskets to bid. The French organization includes specially appointed officers to handle the salvage for the common benefit.

But over all hangs the grit of the French, the nonchalance and insouciance of the Canadian soldier, who knows how to extract the utmost from the comforts and pleasures of any variation of the output of that would for French towns. There are aeroplanes, and guns, and barbed wire, and a wall of fighting men out there in the east to guarantee to him the safety of his time of rest. French towns may be turned from a common mould; they are never uninteresting—they are indissolubly connected in the Canadian soldier's mind with his many bright moments in a war even the ingenuity of the Hun cannot render entirely uncomfortable.

St. John will be visited soon by a delegation of members of the Allied Trades and Labor Council. The delegates to visit the city will be A. Bastien of the eastern committee, and Thomas Moore of the central body.

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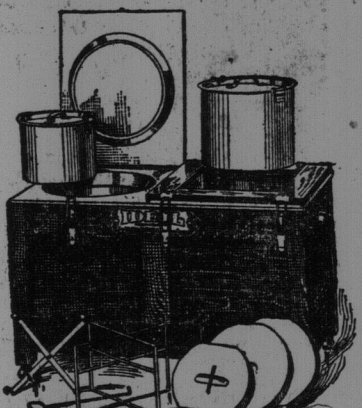
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24 lb. bag R. H. Hold, Standard	1.55
24 lb. bag Purdy Flour, Standard	1.40
24 lb. bag Five Roses, Standard	1.40
(Sugar With an Order)	
10 lbs. XXX Granulated	\$1.00
12 lbs. Light Brown	1.00
HOME-MADE PICKLES	
Mixed Sweet and Chow, per bottle	16c.
25c. SPECIALS	
3 bottles Extract Lemon or Vanilla	25c.
3 cakes Infants' Delight Soap	25c.
3 lbs. Graham Flour	25c.
3 1/2 lbs. Oatmeal	25c.
3 1/2 lbs. Cornmeal	25c.
2 cans Dominion Veg. Soup	25c.
6 pkgs. Cow Brand Soda	25c.
3 rolls Toilet Paper	25c.
3 pkgs. Acme Glass Starch	25c.
2 pkgs. Corn Starch	25c.
2 lbs. Prunes	25c.
Country Eggs arriving daily, per doz.	55c.
Choice Country Butter, per lb.	42c.
5 lb. lots 41c, 10 lb. lots	40c.
New Potatoes, Cabbages, Cukes, etc.	at reasonable prices.

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24 lb. bag Oatmeal	1.55
24 lb. bag Star	1.65
24 lb. bag Purdy	1.65
TEA	
Lipton's	50c.
Orange Pekoe	50c.
King Cole or Morse's	50c.
Red Rose or Ridgway's	50c.
10 lbs. Finest Granulated	\$1.00
11 lbs. Light Brown	1.00
CEREALS	
20 lbs. Oatmeal for	\$1.45
3 1/2 lbs. Corn Flour	25c.
3 lbs. Cornmeal	25c.
3 lbs. Graham Flour	25c.
3 lbs. Whole Wheat Flour	25c.
2 lbs. Rice	25c.
2 lbs. Split Peas	25c.
Green Whole Peas	30c. qt.
3 lbs. Barley	30c. qt.
Finest Yellow Eye Beans	31c. qt.
Finest Small White Beans	31c. qt.
Finest Delaware Potatoes	45c. pk.
Cucumbers	25c. doz.
5 lb. tin Corn Syrup	50c.
4 lb. tin Strawberry Jam	55c.
2 bottles Libby's Sweet Pickles	25c.
Large bottle Sweet Mustard Pickles	25c.
3 bottles Worcester Sauce	25c.
2 bottles Tomato Catsup	25c.
Golden's Mustard	20c. jar
Libby's Chipped Beef	25c. glass
3 pkgs. McLaren's Jelly Powder	25c.
H. P. Sauce	25c.
4 rolls Toilet Paper	25c.
3 bottles Ammonia	25c.
Lemon Pie Filling	15c. tin
Evaporated Peaches	20c. lb.
Lux	6c. bags
Table Soap	15c. tin
Peas	15c. tin
Wax Beans	20c. tin
Union Hand Cleaner	10c. tin
Pink Salmon, 1/2 s.	20c. tin
Pink Salmon, 1 s.	27c. tin
Gold Seal Baking Powder	25c. lb.
Evaporated Milk	20c. tin
2 tin Catsup & Sanborn's Coffee	85c.
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3 tins Sardines for	25c.

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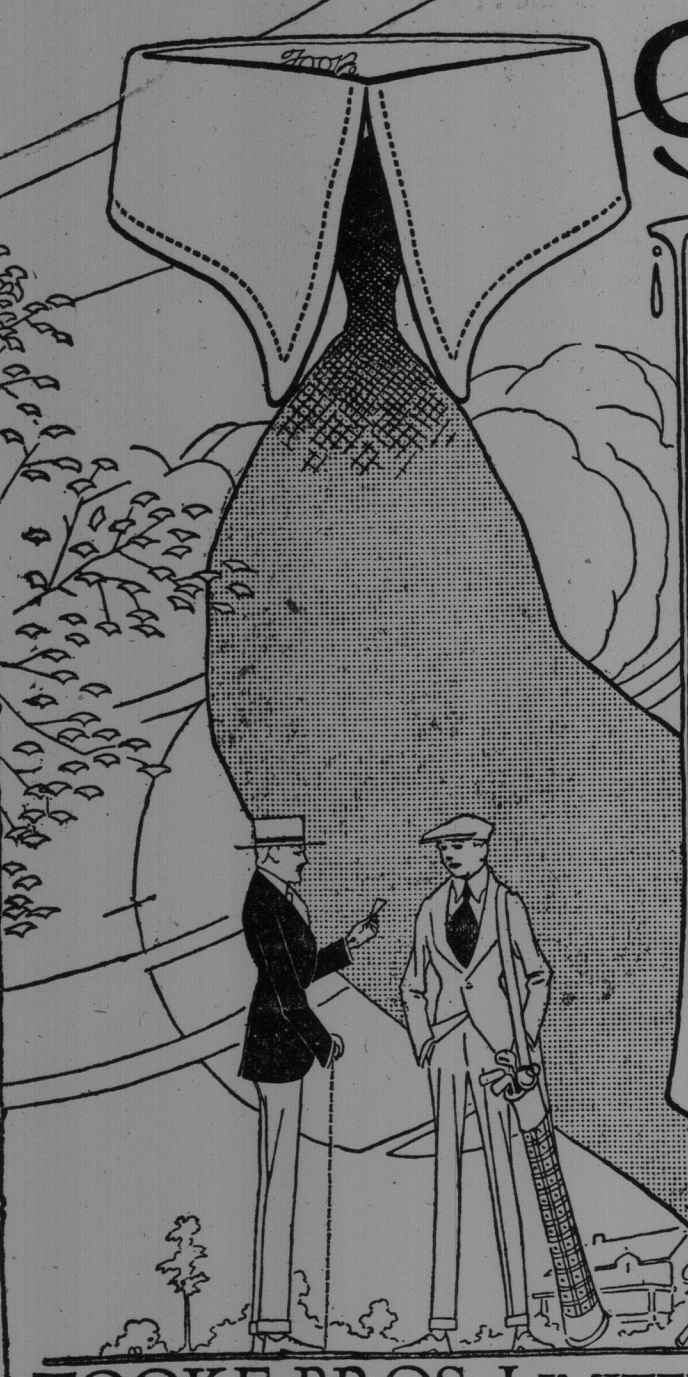
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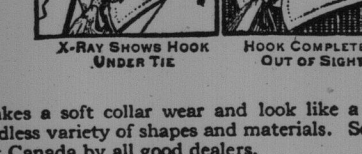
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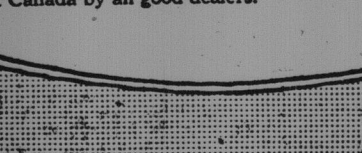
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24 lb. bag Oatmeal	\$1.59
49 lb. bags Oatmeal	\$3.10
Yellow-Eye Beans	Per qt. 34c.
White Beans	Per qt. 34c.
3 lbs. Oatmeal	25c.
2 lbs. Split Peas	25c.
3 lbs. Barley	25c.
2 cans Evaporated Milk	25c.
6 pkgs. Cow Brand Baking Soda	25c.
2 pkgs. Sultana Not-a-Seed Raisins	25c.
4 cakes Lenox Soap	25c.
2 cans Vegetable Soup	25c.
2 lbs. New Prunes	25c.
Loobers	Per can 30c.
Snap	Per can 19c.
7 lbs. Granulated, 3/4 Brown Sugar, \$1.00 (With Orders)	
Choice Country Butter	44c. lb.
A Limited Quantity Tea at Old Prices	55c. lb.

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New Potatoes, Berries, Peas, Beans, Fresh Eggs at Lowest Prices.
Goods Delivered All Over City, Carleton and Fairville

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Matches, 2 boxes	25c.
Pulverized Sugar, 2 lbs.	25c.
Whole Green Peas, 2 lbs.	25c.
Celluloid Starch, 2 pkgs.	25c.
Jelly Powders (Bea), 4 for	25c.
Not a Seed Raisin, 2 pkgs.	25c.
2 in 1 Sho. Polish, 3 for	25c.
Black Knight Stove Polish, 3 for	25c.
Granulated Corn Meal, 3 lbs.	25c.
Cocoa, fine quality in bulk, per lb.	35c.
Orange Pekoe Tea	50c.
Red Cross Beans	15c.
Pumpkin, 2 cans	35c.
Snyder's Soup	35c.
Rice Flour, per lb.	12c.
Gold Soap, 4 cakes	30c.

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Perfect Seal Jars (Pints)	25c. Can
Perfect Seal Jars (Quarts)	30c. Doz
Choice Pink Salmon	20c. Can
Mayflower Red Salmon	25c. Can
White Beans	Per qt. 34c.
Corn Starch	12c. lb.
Best Mixed Starch	12c. lb.
Celluloid Starch	12c. lb.
Tilson's Rolled Oats	32c. pkgs.
Sardines, 9c., three cans	25c.
Oysters, large can	25c.
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Corn Syrup	25c. Can
Three Pkgs. Bea Jelly Powder	25c.

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White Onion Pickles	20c. bottle
Sweet Pickles	20c. bottle
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Beans	From 15c. qt. up
Oleomargarine	32c. lb.
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FINE OLD CHEESE, 15c and 20c. lb.	
1 lb. tin Grisco	30c.
50c. bottle Gillard's Relish	25c.
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