

## Carry Boy Scouts Step Further

Joe Page sees Great Possibilities for Future Defence in Youthful Organization, Draws Lesson from German Preparedness and Makes Suggestions

How often we look back into the dim past of the long ago and see ourselves as children once again. Looking back at our childhood days, probably the most of us, dear readers, who have passed the half century mark will remark with me, "Well can I remember my first hobby-horse." Why, in fact, I almost rode him to death in my waking hours. As we grew a little older, why? It was necessary to have a company of soldiers, with paper cockades, wooden swords and miniature tin guns. Oh! what a brave and intrepid army we were in those long ago, never to be forgotten, happy and innocent childhood days.

"At the age of ten, why, we were regular men, with our little blue and gray cadet caps of the same pattern as the blue and the gray were during the civil war. We had our miniature fights (sham) too, and so it went, as we climbed each grade of the grammar school, so we climbed to added years and stronger, heavier sport until at the top and out of school we settled down to work and make our way through business life."

Up until a decade ago the great majority of the boys of America have gone through this performance. At least since the civil war and in fact a great way beyond that. There were no laws from babyhood to manhood that compelled the youth to devote so many years before majority to the military service and throw up schooling or business work at the command of their country and to submit to this same military command. But we do know that before and ever since the war between France and Germany in 1870 the latter country did exact from each and everyone of its youth, physically able, a stretch of years from that their youthful lives for military service, so that when the call came the military department would be able to say that each and every man throughout the German empire, who was physically fit at the age of sixteen, had had his full army training.

Just imagine, readers, what this really meant to German arms! If we allow that it was only in force since 1870, born in that year, every male child born during the next twenty-eight years, or until 1898, and passing the doctor's examination, had a trained soldier's certificate of from one to three years' service when war was declared in August, 1914. So, one who reads that Germany had been preparing for this present war for the last forty years can at least say there was one item on which they had been at work for that length of time. And that was the one great item of arm and all wars, a well trained and efficient army.

But, remember, this was all accomplished under compulsion, and furthermore I would like to say this same com-



JOE PAGE

pulsory service at times, when it suited those in command or was so ordered, took on the lowest, meanest, vilest and most hideous methods of coercion. In these days of enlightenment would Great Britain or America stand for any such demands of the school youth of their country? No, a thousand times no! But what Germany did under a compulsory law—and made the greatest trained army the world ever knew—Great Britain and America can in time or in the same space of time that Germany had, acquire in each of the respective countries fully as large and as efficient a trained army as Germany ever had at the best. And, what is more, voluntarily and without the loss of home ties, school or business time.

Great Britain and America are (leaving war questions alone) well on their way to the attainment of this, thanks to Sir Baden Powell, who originated the Boy Scout movement a decade or more ago. Since this movement was started I have seen it grow by leaps and bounds from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Quebec to Florida and from all accounts it is moving even faster in the British Isles.

But in speaking of its growth throughout the United States and Canada a prominent picture house when the weekly events were being shown. Flashed on the screen was the title of the next picture, "The California Boys' Rifle Club." Looking at the picture there were seventy-five or more boys to be seen ranging from twelve to sixteen years of age. There were no uniforms, just appeared as if they had come from school. However the picture was certainly a study of boy nature and his love for firearms. Not only were they one and all crack shots, but they knew each and every part of the different mechanisms of their guns and how to take them apart and put them together again, and when they left the field in regimental order, after going through the manual of arms and several other difficult feats, Col. Dupont, head of the famous Dupont Powder Co., had he been at the actual scene, would have undoubtedly donated to the rifle club some splendid trophy, in view of their magnificent showing, as drilled soldiers and rifle shots.

This picture set me thinking, but for some time after I did not get the key to its possibilities. It was some time after—I think it was at St. John, N. B.—I saw a body of Boy Scouts swinging up the street in regimental order behind a life band. Each and every one of them carried a rifle at the slope and, say, it gave me quite a jolt. Every one of them seemed years older than they were. Heads up, eyes straight ahead and, believe it or not, every musket was just at that angle that it seemed as if the point of all bayonets were perfectly aligned and even from point to point. What perfect evolutions, too, they too went through, and I venture to say that the oldest scout of the troop was not more than sixteen years of age. It was then I began to realize the possibilities of what the California Boy Rifle Club might mean.

At home a short time later I said to one of my boys, an Alborna Boy Scout, aged eleven years: "Well, how is the scout troop getting along?" "Fine," said he. "Woodcraft, first aid, drilling, signalling (flags), etc. Had them all at his finger tips. Suddenly, I said where do you keep your rifle? Down at the armory?" "Yes, we don't have any rifles, all we have is a staff." "Well, that's just as good for the purpose as a rifle." "No, it's not. We can't learn to shoot and fix a gun with a staff, and what's

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more we'd feel more like soldiers if they would let us march with guns."

There was the lock and the key to the situation.

As stated in the forepart of this article, it is only natural for a youngster from the time or even before he puts on knickerbockers to have a wooden sword or gun as it is for a wee girl to want to own and nurse a dolly, and as the boy grows older he begins to want to handle the real thing. I don't know why it is, but it is a fact. They, the boys of today, have and have had since the Boy Scout movement was inaugurated, something their elders did not have in their time. Had the Boy Scout propaganda been in effect since 1870, instead of ten years ago, and each and every member of a scout troop during their period of volunteer apprenticeship been instructed fully in military training and the use of arms, Great Britain and the United States would have had today at

the least calculation from four to five million trained soldiers who would have been fit for active service within one month of being called to the colors. All brought about through the voluntary love of youth for the arms and their liking to be soldiers at play, over which, in ninety-first years out of one hundred, he becomes more enthusiastic from year to year or until he becomes of age.

I honestly think, in order to meet the Boy Scouts movement as it should be met, looking the matter squarely in the face, that means should be taken by the various governments to see that each and every official body of Boy Scouts should not only arrange to see that they are equipped with arms required, but also where armories are situated they should have proper recognition. Also rifle ranges in different parts of each and every state and province should be arranged for, where the number of

scouts was large enough to justify this expense.

Saturdays, holidays and certain evenings give them ample opportunity to carry out and learn successfully all that may be required of them. The summer vacation gives them the time of their life for one or more large outings, when sham battles and other tactics could easily be gone through with, all in the way of play and one good time. A boy may forget what he has learned from a book, but what he has learned from play he rarely if ever forgets. He may, by reason of age, not be able to do what he did as a youth, but forget how—never.

Another thing, it brings the various Boy Scout bodies within a radius of a few miles of one another into friendly

competition, and as they vanquish or eliminate one another, the victorious troop looks for further fields to conquer until the movement becomes not only national, but international in time. The thousands of friends of the scout movement in the various states and the provinces of Canada would, I am sure, be only too delighted to offer trophies for competition in their own districts, and when it became national or international competition, many great firms such as the Du Pont Powder Co. or others too numerous to mention, would be among the first to arrange suitable trophies for such competitions, which, while it is competition, is at the same time getting in a clean voluntary manner what Germany has acquired in the hideous and vilest compulsory manner possible—a

trained army.

Remember, Dear Reader, this may not reach you just as I want it to. But again, remember, "In Times of peace, prepare for war."

Germany did. We didn't. At that we'll win.

Had what I suggest been true on our part since 1870, the war would have been over long ago, and Germany out of business.

Phillips-Phillips

At the Brunswick street parsonage, Fredericton, on Wednesday afternoon, Jack William Phillips, of Ruisseau, and Lottie Adelaide Phillips, of Routh Station, were united in marriage by Rev. G. C. Warren.

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