

THE TANK TATLER

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DAME RUMOUR GOES WEST

When Lieut.-Col. J. E. Mills Tells the Boys they Needn't Expect to get Home Soon.

Lieut.-Col. J. E. Mills has been even more popular than ever with all members of the battalion since the afternoon of January 9th, when he intimated that it might be eight or nine months yet before we are returned to Canada.

Fair readers back home may take this statement to mean that the hardened ones of the First Battalion, Canadian Tank Corps, have at last succumbed to the hypnotic charms of the English—not to mention the Scotch—lass and are willing to stay forever and a day in this land of the lotos-eaters. But they will be following a wrong hunch—putting the wrong interpretation on the statement—if they do. The gang may even be accused of an overweening anxiety to return to the bright eyes they left behind them.

Blame Col. Mills for the satisfaction with which the outfit heard the dismal news. Col. Mills has such a pleasant way of showing 'em that we ought not to expect to go home for a few months yet that, when he had finished his talk, there were smiles at the prospect of washing one's own dishes for another year or so.

When the news went around that the Officer Commanding was to address the men there was a hopeful feeling that he would tell them that evening clothes thereafter would be worn instead of pyjamas or that any man refusing to go on leave and accepting £50 expense money would be given two hours' pack drill per diem for the duration of peace.

Nevertheless, it must be confessed, there was an undercurrent of antagonism at his first remarks. Then they began to listen with respect, and before the pleasant little gathering was over everybody was feeling as happy as Capt. Forgie the day he learned that he had become a family man. And the Col. didn't come to bury Caesar either.

The gang had been feeling for some time that they might have slipped home before this if it had not been that we were attached to the Imperials, or were at Bovington Camp, or didn't get to France first, or the moon was not in the right quarter. Then they had

often wondered if an attempt had been made to ship us to Russia, or Egypt or Timbuctoo as a unit without our consent, just as if we were under the age. Battalion's rumors and washhouse wishes flew thick and fast. The only definite thing about any of them was their indefiniteness.

The gang wanted facts.

To fill this want an agitation emanating from "B" company was not long in gaining force to have each company elect a safe and sane representative to get paraded to Col. Mills to seek information.

An interesting member of the truth-seeking trio was C. V. Hughes, who, during the recent war, was such an expert diagnostician that it was generally thought that he was at least the brother-in-law of the man who put the fish in the sea and was favored with the confidence of Sir Douglas Haig, if not Marshal Foch.

Hence it was not surprising that when info. was needed as to when we are to set sail westward that the gang should look to C. V., and C. V. (enterprising chap) should forthwith take steps with the more immediate arbiter of our fate to secure a standing similar to that which he has maintained with the commander-in-chief of the British Expeditionary Force.

The intentions of the aforesaid triumvirate were not long in coming to ears higher up and the men of "A" company listened with interest to a little talk from Major Mavor. The next day Major Mavor met his N.C.O.'s and had a heart-to-heart confab with them. It was said at that meeting that the men were not working hard enough, but an unfortunate suggestion that the battalion be issued with rifles and bayonets to take care of was smothered and the suggester himself is now a marked man. In fact, he is on leave.

There was a great deal of unrest among the Other Ranks, but Bolshevism was not rampant. Some of the officers seemed to think that the whole agitation was against them, individually and collectively. But such was not the case. Some recognized the traditional army customs and others cursed the Military Service Act, Sir Robert Borden, and threatened to turn