

## War Activities of Johnny Canuck's Mothers, Sisters and Sweethearts

By Francis J. Dickie

(Continued from March Number)

OUT there was another and equally important side to the war game; and while not as large a number of feminine workers are applying themselves to it as are engaged in charitable and hospital work, the total is still large and growing more every day as the male population continues to dwindle.

Practically the major portion of the office staffs of banks, bonding, brokerage and commercial houses throughout Canada to-day are made up of women who, twenty-six months ago, had no part in commercial life, their places being filled entirely by men who have now gone forth to fight, many of them never to return.

Thirty-five hundred women hold positions in Canadian banks alone who were not there before the war. As their work is similar to those other women of about an equal number who have taken up duties in commercial, brokerage and other business houses, their progress is indicative of women's success on the whole in these new environs, and while particular reference is here made to those engaged in banking institutions, the same remarks may be attached to the majority of the others.

Of the women engaged a certain percentage had some slight experience previously in bookkeeping, or were possessed of other forms of commercial training; but many of the workers, indeed more than half, had never previously turned their hands to other than slight household duties at home. These latter made the most energetic and enthusiastic of employees, because for the first time they are enjoying real independence.

Fluffy haired, rather frivolous debutantes, who entered banks not knowing the difference between a check and a draft, became in a few weeks' time serious minded, careful presiders over sets of huge and imposing looking books. These recent sojourners in the marts of money have made good in all lesser positions, and a few have arrived at the actual handling of cash in the paying and receiving tellers' cages.

While a certain amount of these rapid promotions can be accredited to the exigencies of war—some of the girls in six weeks attaining to places which formerly occupied men six months and even a year to reach—the majority of promotions were due to sheer ability and a natural adaptability latent in every normal woman—some noted ethnologists to the contrary.

For one thing, women have proven more courteous than men; in certain respects more neat and efficient.

After all, efficiency is not a mere matter of sex, in which the male human is specially favored. But it is only now that a good many heads of great concerns are coming to realize this.

The question is now being seriously considered as to whether or not women will shortly rise to such executive positions as bank inspectors, accountants, managers and presidents. On the subject a very famous official of a leading Canadian banking institution recently expressed himself as believing woman's present position was only temporary, and all would return to places occupied in pre-war times at the close of present hostilities. He based his opinion on the following facts: First, women's nerves cannot stand the grind necessary to business, particularly that consequent to a thorough banking training. Second, because the women who make business their sole objective, their be-all and end-all of life, are very scarce, no matter how high they may rise nor how large salary they come to command; yet it is only through singleness of purpose, a concentrating of effort, and a steady working toward one goal in mind that success in business comes. Thirdly, women are an unreliable factor in business through their tendency to matrimony, and as such big houses are opposed to spending the time necessary in equipping them to fulfill the firm's work, because a week after they are thoroughly competent they may resign to marry. Result, to firm, lost time and a new clerk to break in. Fourth, banking, at least, often requires the moving around of its employees from most junior of

clerk to manager. As a rule women do not like leaving their home town to take up a place in a far away, strange centre. They are not fitted for the nomad life that is often the bank clerk's lot.

No doubt there are many answers to these things that will be made by women.

However, regarding the ultimate disposal of women workers placed in clerical and other positions by reason of the war, little can be said with accuracy at this time. While some of the women so occupied at present still stick to their original assertion that they intend to hold men's places only so long as the war lasts, the majority are inclined to stay at what they have taken up.

Another two years at least will pass before Canadian women's permanency in the banking business and similar occupations can be ascertained.

We now come to another line of

shells for big guns they, of course, did not attempt. The chief operations so far in Canadian munition plants has been the turning out of primers, time fuses, and inspecting, assembling, sorting and packing component parts of smaller shells. Though not heavy work, remarkable care and accuracy is required for some of these duties, certain machine handling requiring accuracy to the one-thousandth part of an inch.

Working conditions in these munition factories are ideal. The rooms are huge, airy, well lighted and spotlessly clean, and the wages high, ranging from \$10 to \$22 a week. In the matter of wages, however, the old antagonism of man has evinced itself: Women, though doing the same work as men, received less pay. So the cry has been raised: "Equal service, equal pay!" Backed by strong suffrage support, the fight for the putting into force of this slogan is now going on.

At this writing, November, there are three thousand women engaged in munition making in the Dominion; probably by the time this is published the number will be doubled, as the ranks of women workers are now being rapidly added to.

work, in the realms of hard physical toil.

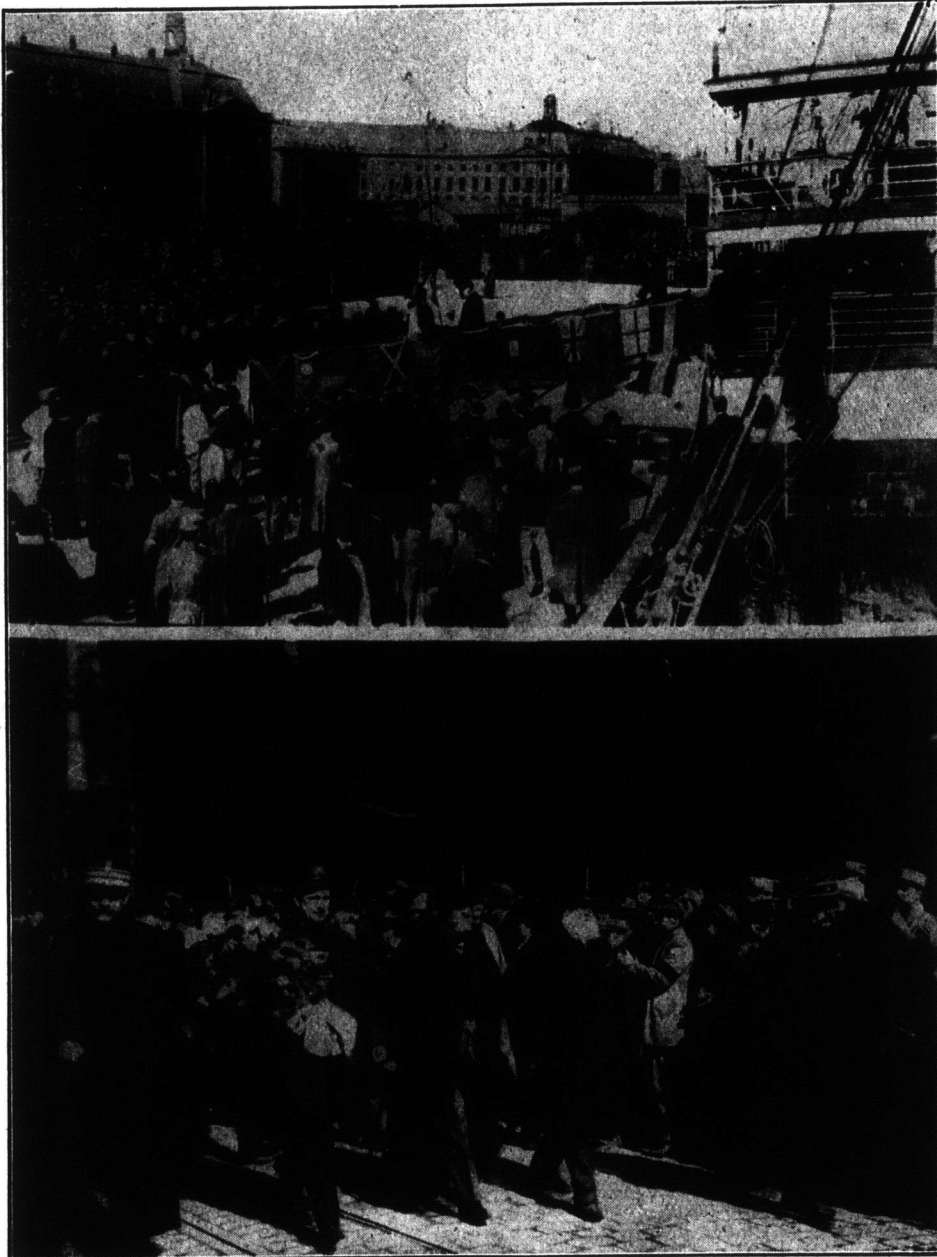
Yet again, and for an entirely different phase of the war did Canada offer the best of her womanhood. Throughout the burning war-ridden regions of Egypt, in the Gallipoli Expedition, Canadian nurses played a noble part. In English hospitals, in hospitals along the French and Belgian fronts, on hospital trains and in temporary quarters close to the line of fight, Canadian nurses are working to-day. Over five thousand of the best of the Dominion's womanhood have donned the neat little army uniform and gone forth to take up their share in the great struggle.

With mention of this last body of women workers, enough has been told to give the outsider unfamiliar with Canada an idea of how much has been done in twenty-six months. At the same time, however, even with attending thoroughly and well to all the varied demands brought about through the existence of war, equally wonderful results have been obtained along other lines of endeavor apart from war, but without any neglect of duties existing from the latter.

Before specifying the most important of these, a short history of the beginning of woman suffrage in Canada is here given, because it was mainly through the success of this movement that the other things came about.

When away back in 1865 the University of Toronto refused to open the doors of its medical college to a female applicant, Emily Howard Jennings Stowe, the first blow was struck in Canada for woman suffrage. Fiery and determined was that lady's swift reply: "Then I shall make it the business of my life to see that the doors are opened, that women may have the same educational advantages as men."

And she did. Graduating from a New York medical college this pioneer suffragette returned to Canada and took up her practice in 1877. The first step toward equal rights for women was in the form of the forming of the Women's Literary Club. But so great was the prejudice against the "new woman," that the Club had to hide its real ambition until 1884. Then it came out boldly as the Dominion Woman's Enfranchisement Association and received a government charter. From this came the present Woman's Canadian Suffrage Association, to-day presided over by Dr. Margaret Gordon, of Toronto. Another strong body resultant



The S. S. Orleans, one of the first American freighters to sail unarmed through the barred zone, arrived in Bordeaux safely. The people turned out and gave the captain and the crew a warm reception. Upper photo shows the vessel at her dock at Bordeaux, with part of the great throng that greeted the vessel. Lower photo shows Captain Tucker and several of the high officials who received him. Capt. Tucker was presented with a bouquet of flowers. The Orleans carried a general cargo and had fifty motor cars strapped to her decks. Thirty-two Americans are in her crew.

endeavor which Canadian women have taken up, a kind utterly foreign to feminine nature, and much farther removed from her sphere than the gentle art of clerking, money counting or similar labors in the big commercial houses. This is munition making.

Women have been engaged in this almost since the war began, in Europe, but it was not until recently that it became necessary for the women of the Dominion to take it up.

By the middle of 1915, however, so great had been the demand for men, that many munition factories dropped in their output through shortage of labor, their employees having enlisted. Gradually the feminine element found its way into the factories to take the places so vacated.

Here they have proved themselves careful, efficient, steady, reliable, and, in certain cases requiring finer workmanship, superior to men. The heavy labors necessary to turning out the man-sized

Unlike the first mentioned class of feminine toilers, they represent a temporary body, one which will almost instantly disappear with the cessation of hostilities. Every class of woman is to be found among them, though strong bodied immigrant lasses from the British Isles and the lustier store workers and girls from middle class Canadian families predominate, the more delicately reared and higher trained and educated misses of wealthier sphere having found clerical occupations more to their inclinations. But fleeting as may be the time in which the women munition makers are occupied, the very fact that they did the work and did it well, is another strong spoke in the suffrage wheel: one which can be used much more effectively as an argument toward the fairness of their claim for equal rights, because in doing work so foreign and of mechanical nature, women have effectively proved their contention to equality with men in the world of



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