



THE RED TRIANGLE



THE "Y" AND DEMOBILISATION.

Follows the Soldier.

The problem of demobilisation touches the military branch of the Y.M.C.A. overseas at only one point. In general the activities of the organisation alter only in location and proportion, following the soldiers wherever they may be and suiting themselves to the varying sizes of camps and their demands. In physical requirements the soldier on a war footing differs little in war or peace; and even in mental needs there is only the difference that what went once to morale for facing the foe now affects a morale of quite as much importance—the tremendous responsibilities of a return to civilian life and its duties of citizenship.

Thrill of New Vigour.

Someone has said that every soldier may not be a hero, but he has ceased to be a zero. The trials of war have made men. Even the youth from the Canadian high schools back home emerges from the struggle bigger in outlook, in independence, in mental equipment, as he probably does in body. There never was a developer like war—which is the only good thing that can be said of it. But the world knows now the depths of unsuspected valour and grit and manliness of the most untried Canadian soldier, the heights to which he can attain in the pursuit of a desired objective. And the soldier himself feels almost unconsciously the thrill of a new vigor of mind and body that comes of the hardships and perils he has faced.

The Utmost Profit.

To carry this new energy and independence, this fresh and unbiassed outlook on life, back to his homeland is an ambition of those who have watched the effects of war. That Canada should profit to the utmost from it and through this means forget a little the terrible anxieties and sufferings that trail on the heels of war is an object worthy of the co-operation of any individual and organisation. Therein lies one of the main problems of demobilisation. There the eyes of the Y.M.C.A. are turned, and in that is its special demobilisation concern.

Canada Needs Enthusiasm.

None knows the Canadian soldier and his ways better than the Y.M.C.A. Living with him everywhere, from the camps in England to the front lines in France, it has seen him under every condition of war. That is sufficient to justify its enthusiasm in the belief that Canada needs him with all his war enthusiasm. That the soldiers will readily purge themselves of the unfortunate sentiments and methods necessitated by the dire contingencies of war is the faith of more than the Y.M.C.A. But that a complete discard of what war has brought into their lives would be a disaster to Canada and the world is the basis of the Y's concern in the details of demobilisation.

A Wider Grasp of Life.

To many it is of little concern what the effects of the war may have been morally. The feelings of Canadian soldiers are based on a home experience that will assert itself at the end of war. The impelling thought is that the men war has made are not so unevenly developed as to have forgotten the old instincts that made them good Canadians; the new assertiveness, self-respect, confidence, and self-assurance have come of a wider grasp of life and its responsibilities and are certain to exhibit themselves in a finer sense of the attributes of a man. From the furnace of war must come more than a little purified metal. But more certain is the production of a quality that will further purify itself in process of time if the proper encouragement is given and the way opened.

Men of Ideas.

It is with some such thoughts that the Y.M.C.A. has joined hands with the chaplains and the Khaki University in a campaign of Citizenship. There is nothing dictatorial or pedantic in title or aim. The Y.M.C.A. happens to have at its disposal some of the equipment for carrying on such a campaign. It can find men with the ideas and in no way can better utilise some of its funds. It is confident that it will be possible through the speakers to supply a staff to hold to, here and there, a thought to ponder over and discuss, a motive to strengthen, a touch of encouragement and assistance. It desires to bring into the period of demobilisation a definite stage in the return to citizenship. The process of reversion may be simplified and shortened, the possible losses of the period avoided. For the disappearance of the incentive that existed so long as there was an enemy to face may in some cases, in this quiet transition stage, bring the uncertainties of reaction.

A Strong Platform.

The program planned to carry out this idea consists of well-known speakers, a few from America, most of them from the existing military forces and the Khaki University. The co-operation of the soldiers themselves is the real impetus to the movement confidently expected. Already many of the speakers have appeared in the large camps in England. Bishop Stringer, of the Yukon, has been in Seaford and Bramshott; Dr. Symonds in Witley and Bramshott; Col. Macdonald at Bramshott, and will visit all the other large camps; Taylor Statten at Witley and Seaford, with his address on "Hero Worship and the Canadian Boy"; Dr. Frank J. Day at Rhyl. Col. Almond, D.C.S., will visit each of the large camps to speak on reconstruction. Mr. Sovereign and Mr. Townsend are speaking at the forestry camps on "The Question of Citizenship."

Some Future Events.

Early in the year many prominent English public men will appear in Canadian camps, dealing with the tasks of new citizenship. A feature of the meetings will be question periods, when the individual problems of the soldiers will be treated.

PATRIOTISM.

I believe that all kindly acts are eternal, and linger about the land where they are done, that they can be felt as beauty and inspiration about the land. The inhabitants are quickened by that soul, and nations are only great when true to that soul. Man only can be great when he is true to the best he has imagined. St. George stood up for the poor, and cared for beauty, and no finer thing can be said of a man or a nation than that.

Patriotism is not a singing of praises. It is a very deep thing, a very sad thing, a very stern thing. St. George didn't go out to fight the dragon without some sense of defeat. He knew that his sword might be broken, that he would never see his children again, and that people would probably call him a fool when he was done. He went out, I think, as our battalions went out, a little sick, and a little trembling. He went out into the mud, and waited for the dragon to come on. England before the war was a nation who had forgotten her soul, but now she has remembered it. It may seem to you that we have done little, that we have been clumsy. We are hard pressed to-day. But you know that no matter how long the way, nor how bitter, nor how bloody, that we'll stick it.

King David when he was besieging a city, in the summer when it was hot, wished for a drink from the pool just outside the city gates. But when his men got the water for him at the risk of their own lives, he said he could not drink what had been gotten at such a sacrifice, that it would be like drinking blood, and he poured it out to his God.

Now the young men are bringing us the water of peace. This will, I believe, be the peace that passeth understanding, when we shall have our lives again, our loves again, and can do our work. It will be like the drinking of the blood of these young men. Love and courage are the main things in this life. With them you can face the world. We will need them when we try to re-make the world. May America and Great Britain stand together in the re-making of this world a little nearer to the heart's desire.—JOHN MASEFIELD, in New York.

GOOD FOR US.

The rain is falling as I write, the cold November rain; it is a black and cheerless night, and tomcats on my tin roof fight, and make a noise insane. The rain is pelting, pelting down, I hear it splash and beat, and I'm unwise to wear a frown and rend my spangled dressing gown—this rain will help the wheat. All things unpleasant do us good, so all the sages say; instead of using steaks for food we ought to make a stew of wood, or boil some prairie hay. To teeter in a chair and rock is pleasant, I must say; but all the doctors come and knock and say we ought to go and walk a hundred miles a day. If there is something we despise, that is the stuff we need; we hate to swat the silly flies, but in that task our safety lies, so runs the health board's scree. We all are liable to ills which make us pale and thin; and while we pay the doctors' bills we know there's nothing to their pills unless they taste like sin. Sometimes I think that life's a fake, a rather sorry jest; my spirit feels a throbbing ache, for everything I ought to take is something I detest. The rain is streaming down the door, like water gone to seed; it grieves my heart, it makes me sore, and, since it is a beastly bore, I know it's what we need.—WALT MASON.