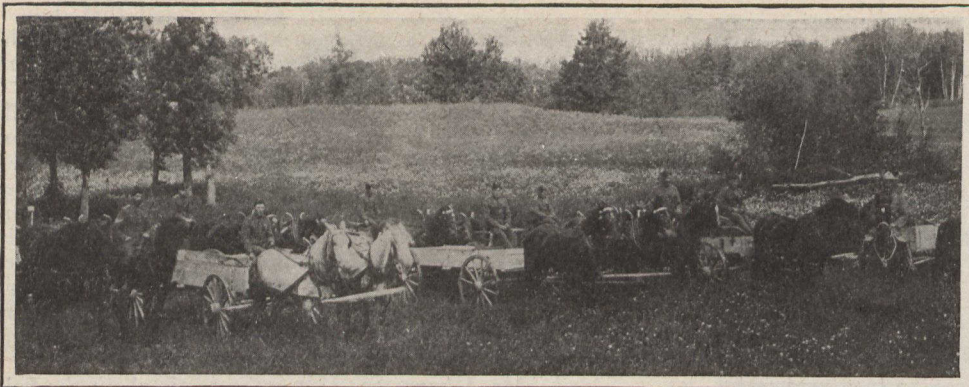




Waggon Drill of the Canadian Army Service Corps, at Sherbrooke Camp, P.Q.



Carpenter, Cook, Officers and Sergeant Matthews of Company 11, C.A.S.C., Winnipeg.

WHEN you see the rural and urban regiments in various parts of Canada jogging and marching away to summer camp with bands playing and nags kicking up the dust you are inclined to be a soldier. It looks like a huge picnic. You talk to officers who have just got back from camp and they speak of it as tenderly as a veteran of his scars. It's the time of year when even the man in plain clothes or as little clothes as possible inclines to hike to the unknown places; to get away from roofs and sidewalks and telephones—and the men of the rural and the urban corps, whether in redcoats or khaki or navy blue, are the chaps who best appreciate what camp life really is.

Just what the real work of camp amounts to is no business of the pictures on this page. There is plenty of work; just as strenuous as some that an army does in action—and as much like it as possible. There's pageantry in it; music and marching and pomp and procession, and as much of the realistic mimicry of war as can be put on the stage in a time of peace when the farmers are too busy with pitchforks to shoulder muskets.

But there is also a huge amount of system; and if there were not the average redcoat would as soon go into a construction camp with the navvies as into a city of canvas at Niagara, Winnipeg or Kingston. Ask the Army Service Corps what it knows about system. Ask Col. Langton at the head of it what he knows about that arm of the service. He will tell you. He knows more about what it is now compared to what it used to be than any other man. You may give Johnnie Canuck a gun and a uniform and all his accoutrements; give a cavalryman a horse and saddle; but if you don't give either of them jolly good grub, well cooked and plenty of it, and the horses the best of hay and oats and as much as they need—there will be the grumpiest lot of inefficient gunpowder men that ever slept under canvas.

There is an ancient saying that an army crawls on its stomach. It's as true of a summer camp as of an engagement. Before the year 1903, it didn't seem to matter very much in Canadian military camps what kind of locomotion-fuel the average redcoat got into his stomach or how many of the horses were gaunt of hay and oats and good water. Johnnie Canuck in camp before 1903 was about as well off as a convict; certainly no better off than a Tommy Atkins of the Crimea. And if Johnnie hadn't had a good deal of respect for the general system he

wouldn't have gone back for a second or third summer of it.

Hence the army service corps as it applies to Canadian camps. This, however, was first framed up in the British Army after the gruelling experiences of the Crimea and after the pattern of the French system, its first name being the Military Land Transport; changed in 1857 to the Military Train, and in 1882 to the Army Service Corps. Now there are hundreds of Canadians who know very well what that corps amounted to ten years ago, for they found out how it worked down on the veldts of South Africa—the greatest feat of army service ever undertaken by the British War Department—which was about the time that the Canadian soldier in summer camp was putting up with convict rations. The Militia Department were jolly well told about the contrast when the Canadian contingents got back to Canada. Hence the change; by means of which every instruction camp in Canada is commissariat as thoroughly as the British army. Ye gods! What a change! To appreciate what it amounts to you must understand two things: the astounding amount of supplies for both man and beast required by a modern military camp; and the actual conditions under which these were mismanaged and bungled under the old lack of system.

To begin with—the actual catering. Take just one camp. This year the Niagara camp got away with about 8,000 pounds of bacon, 60,000 pounds of potatoes, 8,000 pounds of beans, butter and sugar, 4,000 pounds of cheese, 2,000 pounds of split peas and salt, 300 pounds of coffee, half a ton of tea, over a hundredweight of pepper, 12,000 pounds of onions and ditto of cabbages. To find out how much hay and oats the horses gobbled up involves a trifle of arithmetic; based on the fact that there were 1,600 horses in camp and that to each draught horse goes daily 10 pounds of oats, 19 pounds hay, and to each cavalry horse 10 pounds oats and 16 pounds hay.

The rations allowed for each man in camp per day, are as follows:—1 1/2 pounds of bread, 1 pound of meat, one pound of potatoes, 2 ounces each of bacon, beans, jam, butter and white sugar, half an ounce of salt and split peas, one-third of an ounce of coffee, one-quarter of an ounce of tea, one-thirtieth of an ounce of pepper, six ounces of fresh vegetables and one ounce of cheese.

Not much hard tack about this; but of old it was far different. Before the days of the A.S.C. both the rations served and the means of getting them

THE CANADIAN ARMY SERVICE CORPS

By A MILITARY MAN



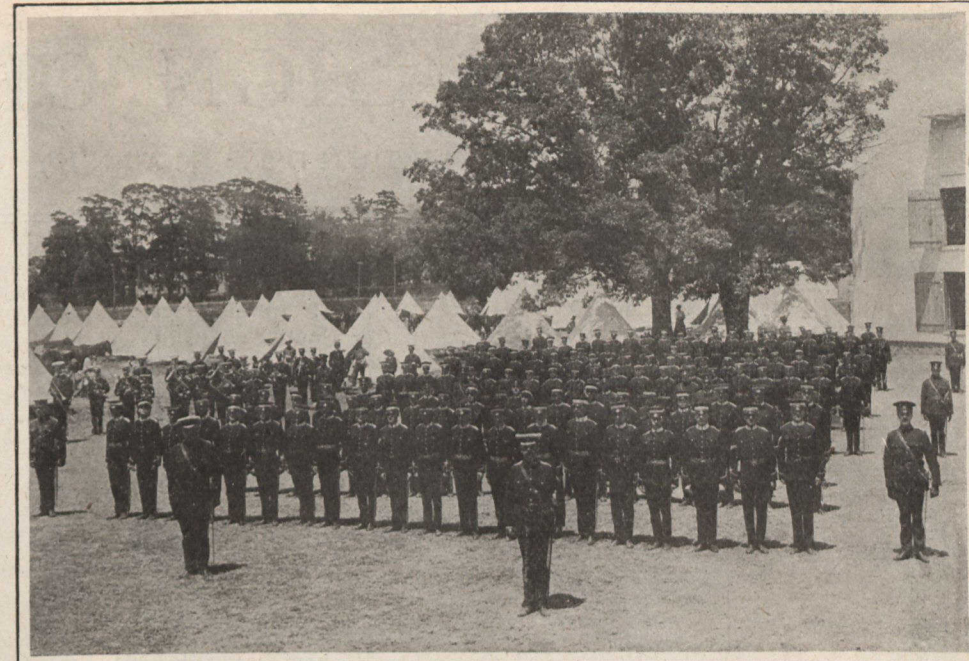
Niagara Camp—Bakers Manning the Ramparts, Walls of Loaves in Twelve Camp Ovens Behind and Col. Langton to the extreme left.



This is the sort of Delivery System that has replaced the Wheelbarrow Squad, at the Supply Office in Camp—thanks to the C.A.S.C.



First Company of the C.A.S.C. ever under canvas, the Transport Section at Niagara, 1903.



Companies Nos. 2, 9 and 12, with Regimental Band at Niagara in 1908.



Half Company in Brandon Camp, 1908, C.A.S.C., No. 11.

were amazingly crude. It was a system of sheer pot-luck. The quartermaster had his troubles. They began with a species of graft; which thrives quite as well on army contracts as on government works of any kind. The moment it was given out that camp was to go into canvas in a certain town or city or thereabouts, the contractors became busy. To the victors, the spoils: these caterers to the camp lost nothing. They got so much a pound for everything edible—and quality was not considered, being up to the contractor who was not under the beak of the C.A.S.C.

So with the regiments under cover, behold the poor quartermaster at break of day with a fatigue party he had managed to scare up or beat up as best he might—the wheelbarrow squad—with meat-racks, bags and boxes advancing in force upon the supply store where the contractor with a fat cigar and a lordly smile was the all-boss. Bull beef was the one steady feature. After an hour of grouching and haggling the wheelbarrows were packed with the quota—including bread, meat, potatoes, tea, sugar, salt, pepper and cheese. Back to the camp went the sweating wheelbarrow squad; supplies distributed along the line—dumped, rather. Midst of the camp was a hole in the ground and a pair of camp kettles, which was the kitchen manned by persons who for want of a better name were called cooks. The cooks' prime stand-by was skilly—bull-beef skilly.

When the cooks had the brews ready, and at the sound of the mess bugle, the men of each company came on parade—the mess-tin parade. Sometimes it was every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. Back they trotted to the tents, each man with his tin of skilly; which if he didn't like it he lumped it by chucking out on the open ground such as he didn't want: hence stench and disease and so forth; hence the need for medicine chests and medical skill, most of which in those days was about on a par with the bull-beef skilly and the wheelbarrow squad.

So here was some need of the A.S.C., thanks to which the entire scheme of the commissariat as well as the system of transports over-all is organised into a perfect working machine as rigidly controlled as the militia units. Exit the bull-beef contractor. Days before the camp assembles the senior A.S.C. officer in charge of a company of the same is notified of the names of all contractors—the same being under contract to supply according to quality and specifications. The senior officer goes to the

camp ground and arranges for the whole menage. Delivery is a mere detail—exit the wheelbarrow squad. The camp itself is a cycle of industries; abattoirs, bake-ovens and stores—all duly inspected by the officers of the A.S.C. as well as the supplies themselves, all of which not up to standard are thrown out. Expert butchers, bakers and cooks are employed. A fair price is paid for all supplies. Graft is eliminated. Efficiency is multiplied by eliminating both waste and friction.

Then the quartermaster—no longer boss of the wheelbarrow squad at peep of day—arrives one day ahead of the regiment. His duty is to see that everything necessary to make a number of regiments into a common self-supporting camp is on hand at just the moment it is needed. This includes not merely rations, but tents, harness, ordnance—everything that has to be deported in waggons, which are all part of the impedimenta of the A.S.C., duly labelled and certified. Perfect system. One full day before a redcoat sets foot or a horse jigs over the camp ground everything is ready; tents pitched, commissariat department in perfect working order; meals ready to serve almost as soon as the tents are manned and the horses picketed; A.S.C. waggons everywhere—operated and controlled as perfectly by the A.S.C. as the motions of any squad or battery. Division of labour is complete—butteries, bakeries, groceries, forageries and fuel supplies. The quartermaster completes the scheme. All he has to do now is to make out a requisition on the supply officer of the A.S.C. for just such rations as he requires; forward the same at a given hour, following day his supplies are distributed not in wheelbarrows, but in A.S.C. waggons.

Hence it is that the A.S.C. is a drill organisation; in a given time so much work to do right on the dot and do it well. It is the business end of the corps army, but drilled as a combatant corps in case of need, every movement of the corps in compliance with the working force of the entire machine. The basic principles of the A.S.C. are—that rations are no good if not of good quality; that good-quality rations are useless with bad cooks; that tents half a mile from the camp when the men arrive are as bad as none at all, harness mixed and muddled in transport, ordnance delayed and jumbled up, anything transportable that is not transported

CONCLUDED ON PAGE 21.