

PREFACE

The story of the Great War (1914-1918) has already passed into the volumes of history and there are many pages dealing with Canada's part in the fray, telling mostly of her exploits in the field and the valor and courage of her soldiers, which all true Canadians feel cannot be too greatly emphasized or too highly praised. Yet we would not forget the splendid part played by "Canada-at-home" during those crucial years—of those who remained to keep the wheels of industry whirring night and day, those who planted and garnered the grain and the mighty organizations within the country, that kept the business of the nation running smoothly and efficiently while thousands and thousands of the finest of her manhood, at the call of duty, poured out of the country to the amphitheatre of the conflict.

Among these organizations within the country, there were probably none which had a greater burden thrust upon them than the Railways of Canada. For, on them fell the task of carrying men from the north, the south, the east and the west—from every nook and corner of this vast country to our Atlantic seaports that they might sail away to the Great Adventure. They were carried by thousands, week after week, and month after month, and still the call came that more be sent within as short a period of time as possible, and the steel rails, up and down, and across Canada, literally sang to the tune of war as one long heavy train after another rushed along with its precious burden of human freight and its heavy loads of munitions, steel, foodstuffs, clothing and other commodities contributed by the Dominion. With the end of hostilities, shipload after shipload of war-scarred heroes landed at the Atlantic ports. Sometimes several thousands a week came and had to be transported by rail to their homes as speedily as possible.

The task was a herculean one. It meant that each and every member of the great railway organizations had to put all his energy into the task of the hour and be ready for any call whether it came by night or day in order that the system might measure up to what the nation expected of it. It meant a hundred and one things that the general public has never realized.

And, so that the Archives of the Past may hold a permanent and tangible record of the contribution of the Railways of Canada, in the Great War, and that employees of the "National" lines may realize that their efforts during the stress and strain of the war years have not been forgotten, this little volume is presented to the public by the Canadian National Railways with the hope that it may be of special interest to "Young Canada".