

I am prepared to read it. This is the message which came on Saturday to General Foulkes from General Murchie:

Reference my GS. 2091 following is text of statement issued by Simonds to the *Maple Leaf* with copy to Canadian Press under heading "Statement by Lieutenant-General G. G. Simonds commanding Canadian forces in the Netherlands". Statement begins.

On September 21, 1945, I reluctantly ordered the removal of the editor of the *Maple Leaf*, Major J. D. Macfarlane, M.B.E. I give you below my reasons for so doing.

Freedom of the press is a vital principle which we are all concerned to uphold. But the position of the *Maple Leaf* differs from the ordinary newspaper in that it holds a monopoly. It is the only daily newspaper regularly presenting its views and news to the whole Canadian army overseas. Ordinarily in our country or community there are a number of newspapers presenting news and providing editorial comment on current problems. In this way important and controversial subjects are presented and discussed from many angles—if one paper or group of papers emphasizes one aspect and advocates certain action others will independently present other and contrary angles. A balance of views is available and each individual is enabled to form his own opinions based upon all the information and arguments available through the whole press.

Because of the monopoly position of the *Maple Leaf*—because it is the only newspaper regularly serving the whole Canadian army—it is inherent in its charter that its editorial columns must present all points of view and a balanced statement of the subjects with which it deals. Particularly is this important when it deals with the subjects in which all soldiers are acutely interested. It is quite wrong for the editor of the *Maple Leaf* to give a biased view or what is his own personal view in disregard of the views of others on internal military questions which would tend to cause antagonism and set one group formation of service within the army against another.

So long as the editor of the *Maple Leaf* adhered to his charter and presented unbiased and impartial argument in his editorial comment he was free and would always be free from any interference by myself or any other commander. But on September 19, 1945, there appeared an editorial entitled "On this repatriation question the *Maple Leaf* reveals" and on September 20, 1945, a further editorial entitled "To continue" both of which in my opinion made biased and most unfair comment upon an issue affecting every soldier awaiting repatriation. I met the editor and told him that though I had no quarrel with his statement of facts and no desire to suppress or hide them I thought his comment biased and unjust and far from doing any good could only cause unhappiness and dissension in the ranks of the army. I gave him what I considered "The other side of the picture", which I give in full below, and told him he was under an obligation to present those aspects as well as his own personal views in an editorial in the *Maple Leaf*. This he refused to do and he further stated that he refused to adhere to the principle that a balanced expression of opinion as opposed to his own personal opinion should govern the editorial policy of the *Maple Leaf*. Under these

conditions I considered I had no alternative but to order his removal as editor.

It is with deep regret that I have had to take this step. I do not believe that anyone has a greater appreciation of all Major Macfarlane has done than I have myself but in a newspaper holding a practical monopoly I cannot concede the principle that the editor may use it as a medium of expression of his own views regardless of the views of others. I have no personal antagonism towards Major Macfarlane—on the contrary I offer him my personal gratitude and thanks for all he has done since the inception of the *Maple Leaf*. I would be the very last to suggest that the fact he holds strong personal views is any detriment to his personality or character. His point score entitles him to repatriation now and in arranging this I wish him good luck in his future undertakings.

"The other side of the picture."

I have said that I considered the editorials in the *Maple Leaf* of September 19 and 20 presented a biased point of view and were unjust. I am not challenging the facts as presented and have no desire to suppress them.

I consider the editorial of the nineteenth unfortunate, first of all because the very title of it and the whole tone implies that the *Maple Leaf* has unearthed something that the authorities are trying to conceal.

Every soldier in the Canadian army overseas ought to have known long ago that the plan approved by the Department of National Defence for repatriation of the Canadian army, the plan for the execution of which I have been made responsible, envisages units returning as such with personnel of point scores between 150 and 50. This was stated in the official publication "After victory in Europe" issued last May. It was repeated in General Crerar's circular letter of July 10, and I have personally so informed officers, N.C.O.'s and men when speaking to them on this problem. The fact that a concession has been made to high point scores by inserting further Canada drafts between the moves of successive divisions has not changed the policy that units when they move as such will take with them all personnel on their strength with point scores of between 150 and 50. There can be no "revelation" in that it has been known and published in the *Maple Leaf* and discussed for months.

The real issue by the *Maple Leaf* and the real reason why I condemn the editorials of September 19 and 20, is that they advocate that N.R.M.A. soldiers should be treated differently from volunteer soldiers for purposes of repatriation. It may be unfortunate that the individual cases referred to in the *Maple Leaf* editorial of September 19, 1945, were posted last June to a unit of the first Canadian infantry division but to remove them now I am convinced would be unjust for it would mean that for soldiers with equal points the volunteer and N.R.M.A. soldier must be treated differently. This would be wrong from both the practical and moral point of view.

Of soldiers who started their service in the N.R.M.A. some after being called up and while still serving in Canada volunteered to come overseas. Some who were sent to the United Kingdom as N.R.M.A. became "active" volunteers whilst in the United Kingdom, some sent to reinforcement units on the continent became "active" volunteers after reaching the continent. Some sent as reinforcements to the continent never became "active", they were posted forward