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THE CANADIAN WAR PICTORIAL

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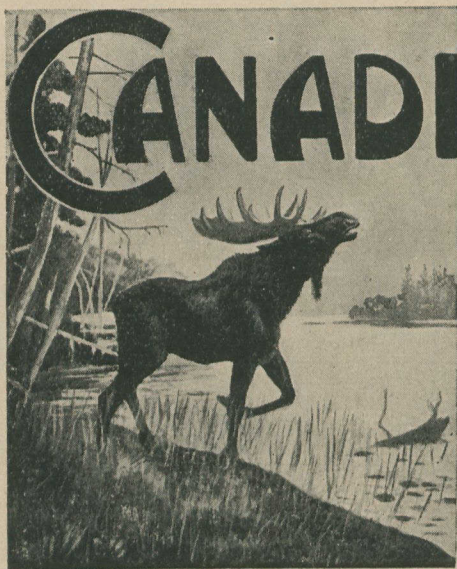
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THE CANADIAN WAR PICTORIAL



THE FIRST STAGE OF THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE
Our artillery fire was terrific. Shells are seen breaking on the German front-line trenches

THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

VIMY RIDGE was a military position of imposing strength, of innumerable fortifications, of formidable reputation. It was defensively strong in natural characteristics as well as in the machinery and devices of the Hun. Its defences were of such extraordinary quality that when the French bombarded a point immediately to the south-east of the Ridge in the autumn of 1915, they expended one hundred fifteen-inch shells without seriously reducing the fire of the German batteries, for those batteries were all sunk beneath and behind elaborate constructions of earth and concrete.

On the morning of Easter Monday the Canadians struck at Vimy Ridge on a wide frontage.

For a week past our guns had subjected all the threatened region to a terrific bombardment. British airmen, taking advantage of every hour of clear weather to observe the effects of our fire, reported the enemy positions smashed—trenches blown away and roads in the rear broken to uselessness.

At five-thirty in the morning of the 9th of April the attack was launched. Every piece of our massed artillery and many advanced eighteen-pounders opened fire. Our "heavies" bombarded the German positions on and beyond the Ridge, and our field guns laid an intense barrage of shrapnel, strengthened by indirect machine-gun fire, along the front.

The barrage advanced by lifts, and close behind the barrage moved the waves of attacking infantry.

The early hours of the morning were cold and blustery, with flurries of snow blowing over the field.

All went well with the right and centre of the attack. The enemy offered only a feeble and fragmentary resistance. Intricate systems of defence and many fortified shelters fell into our hands. The smashing deluge of our shells drove the Huns from their broken trenches to their dug-outs; and from their dug-outs they issued in hundreds upon the lifting of the barrage and the arrival of our infantry—not to fight, but to surrender.

The left was not so fortunate. At this point of our attack the enemy had constructed a tunnel running from his fire-trench towards our position; and now, by way of this tunnel, his infantry came to the surface in rear of our advancing barrage and infantry, remanned their front-line trenches and attacked the attackers. Heavy and prolonged fighting followed. It was not until ten o'clock that night that the Germans were driven from the tunnel and reoccupied trenches and disposed of.

Snow was falling heavily by now, and there was immediate need of consolidating gains.

The fight continued on Tuesday. Our troops devoted their energies to consolidating their new positions in expectation of vigorous counter-attacks. But the counter-

(Continued overleaf)



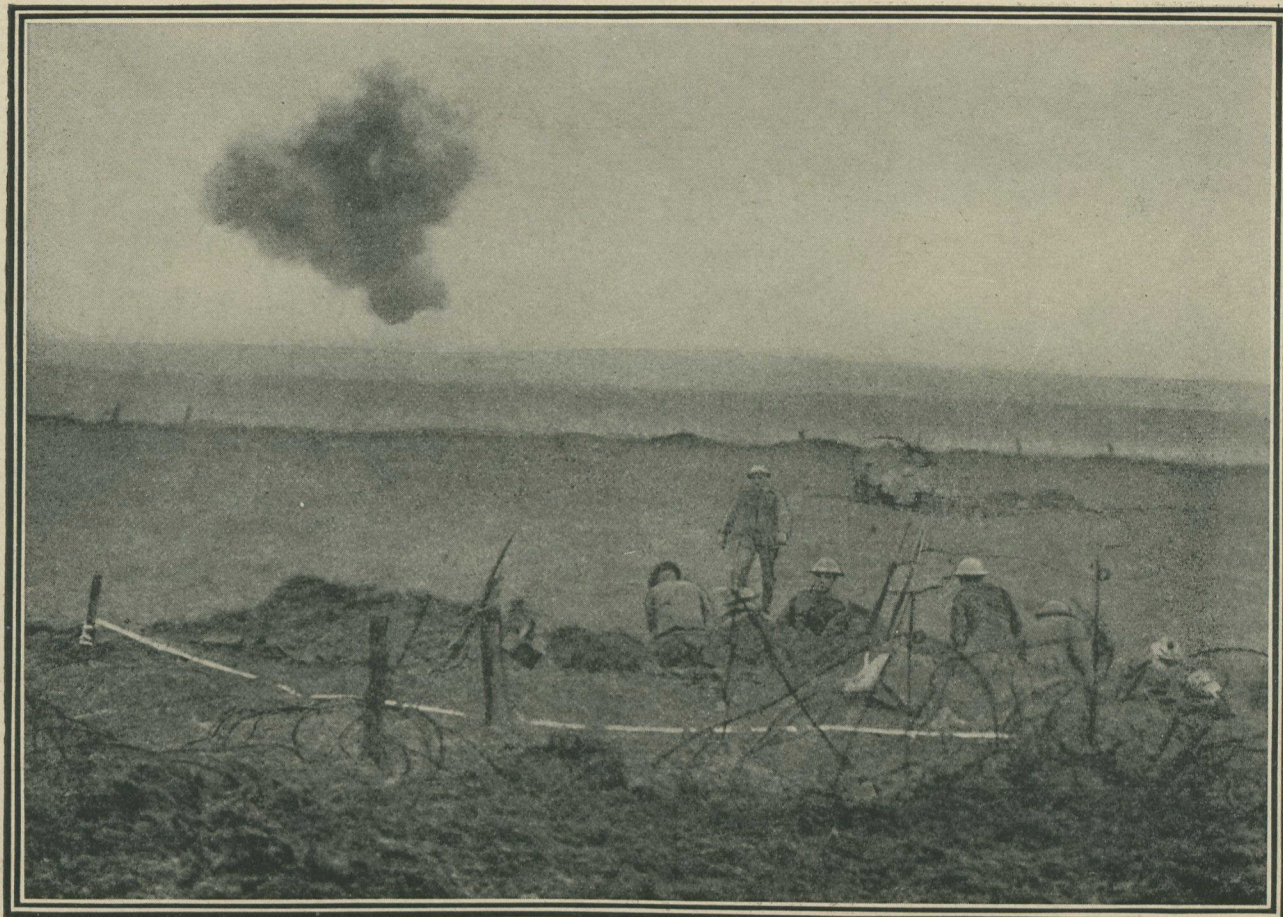
CANADIANS ADVANCING THROUGH GERMAN WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS



THEY REACH THE CREST OF VIMY RIDGE



AS THE CANADIANS ADVANCED, PARTIES OF HUNS LEFT THEIR DUG-OUTS ONLY TOO GLAD TO SURRENDER



SHRAPNEL BURSTING OVER OUR TROOPS AS THEY DIG THEMSELVES IN

THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

(Continued)

attacks did not develop. The enemy had no retort ready. Evidently his ejection from Vimy Ridge had been so swift and violent and sure as to leave him utterly unnerved and in a state of physical and moral collapse. Having been broken once by that unbearable and indescribable onslaught, he had neither heart nor nerve to court a repetition of the experience. Better troops than these might well have arrived at a similar conclusion in regard to this matter. Human flesh and blood, human nerve and brain, even the immortal spirit of man while still encased in human clay, may reach a limit to the endurance of horror. This limit was poured upon the strongholds and garrisons of Vimy Ridge by the guns of the Canadian Corps. From half-past five until noon our barrage and bombardment had been continuous; the barrage in front of the left portion of the field of operations had continued until ten at night; and the bombardment of the German positions beyond the thrust of our infantry outlasted even our final barrage.

Throughout the entire battle and the days that followed, the retaliation of the German artillery was light as compared to the fire of our batteries.

On Wednesday morning, at five-thirty, in a blinding snowstorm, Canadian infantry went forward behind an intense barrage to capture the last outstanding point on the northern end of the Ridge. The ground was almost knee-deep in snow and mud. The men moved slowly, guided by their curtain of shrapnel-fire that lifted before them by easy stages. In spite of the murk and mud and cold, and the protesting fire of the enemy, they found their objective and took it.

This brilliant assault concluded the Battle of Vimy Ridge.



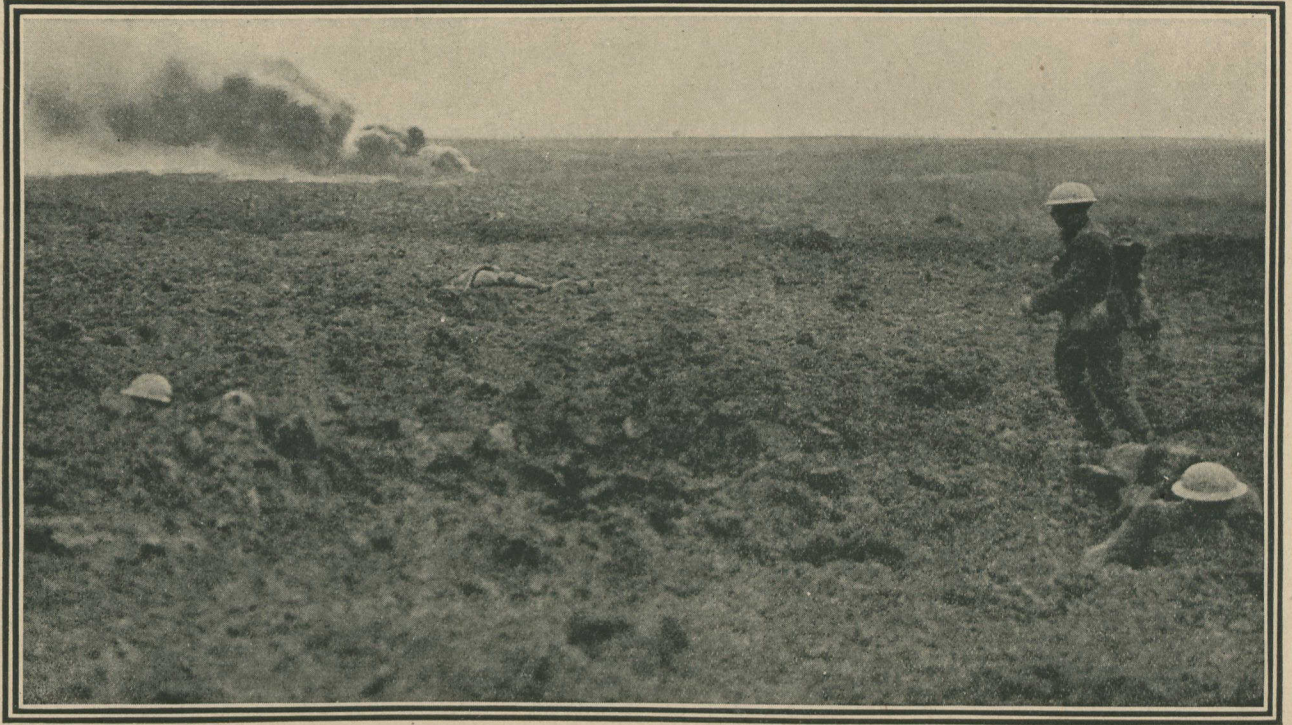
CANADIANS ADVANCING ON THE ENEMY'S THIRD-LINE TRENCHES



GERMAN SHELLS BURSTING BEHIND OUR DUG-IN TROOPS



A CAPTURED MACHINE-GUN EMPLACEMENT ON THE CREST OF VIMY RIDGE AND THE MEN WHO DROVE THE HUNS FROM IT



TAKING COVER FROM A H.E. SHELL



ON GUARD OVER GERMAN DUG-OUTS



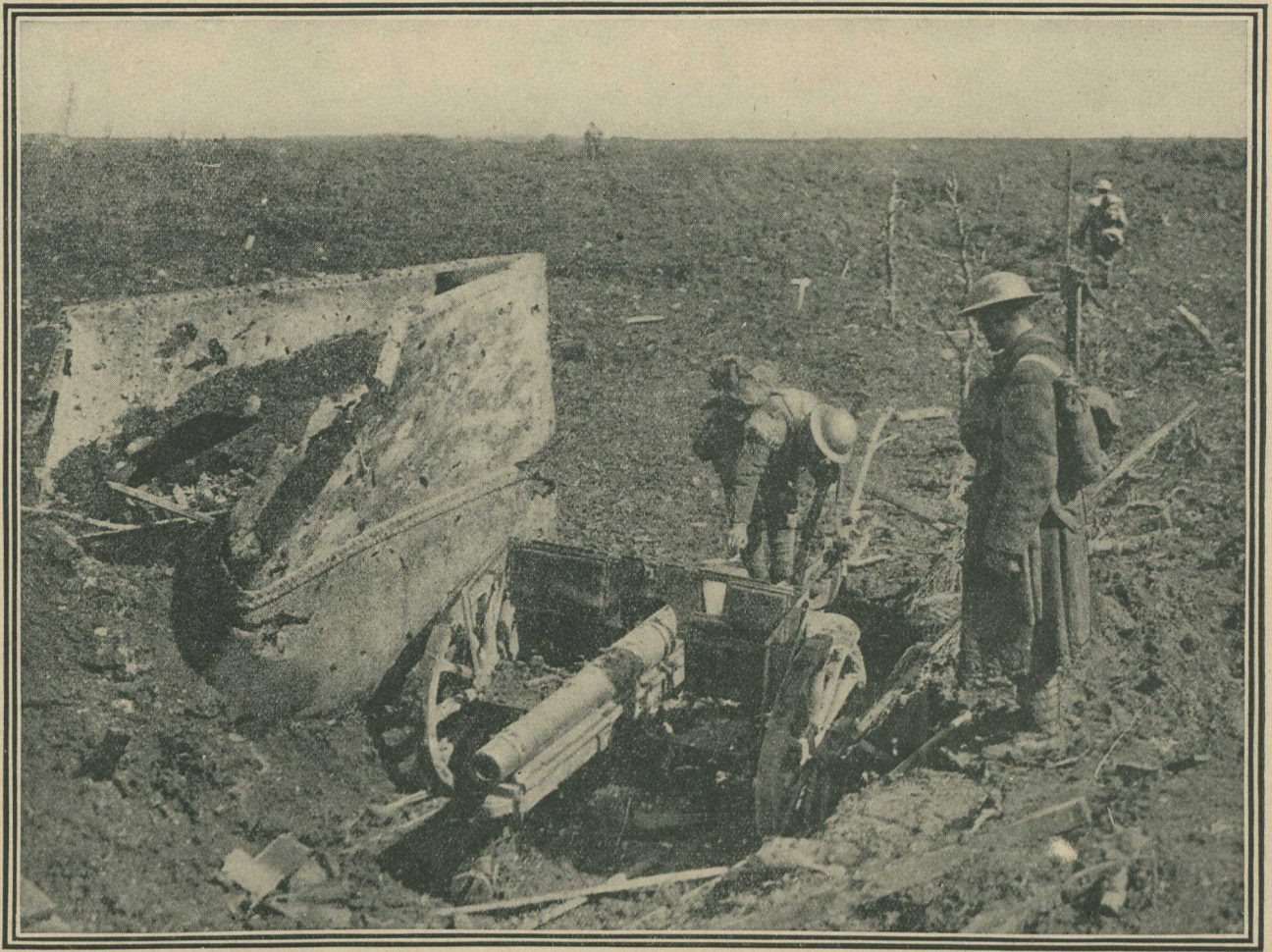
FIRST AID FOR WOUNDED CANADIANS



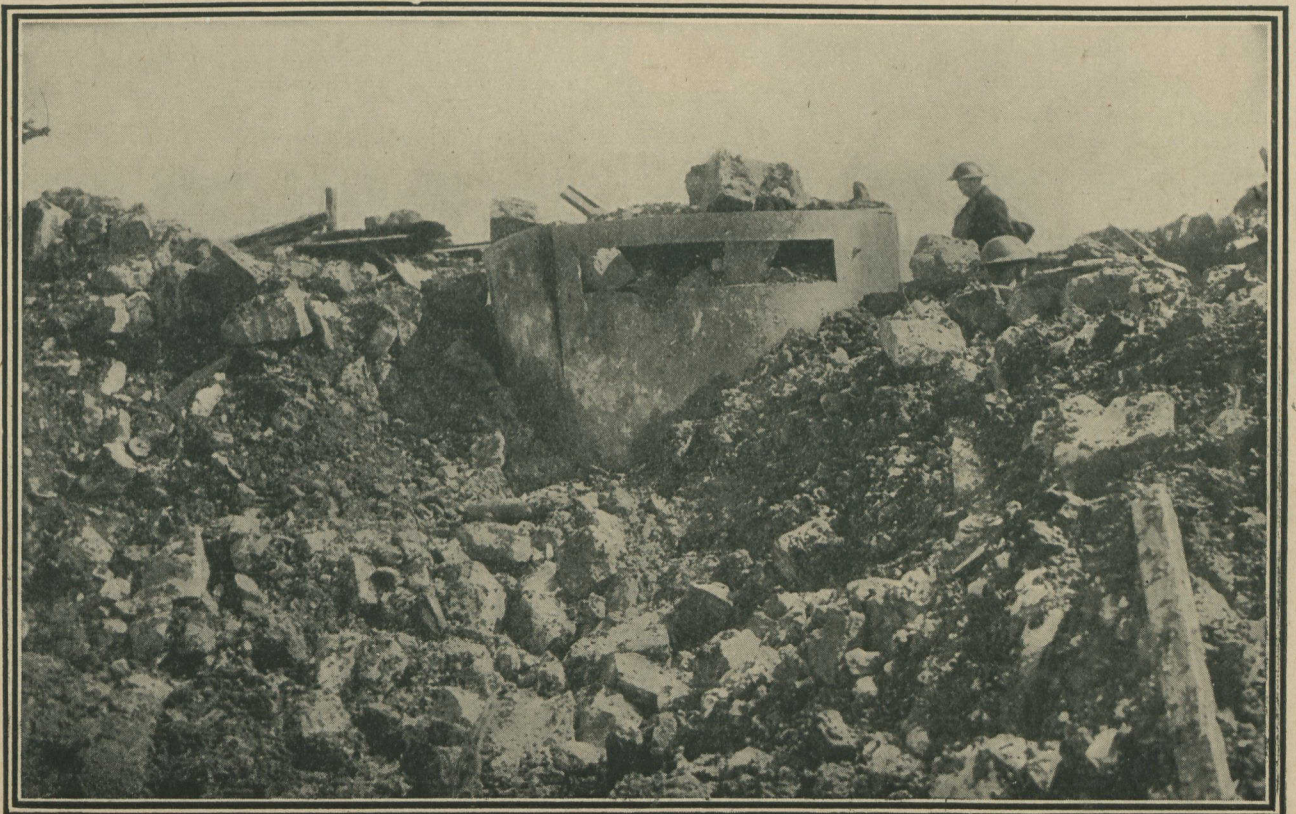
CANADIAN MACHINE-GUNNERS HARASS THE RETREATING GERMANS



FOLLOWING THE CAPTURE OF VIMY RIDGE, LARGE NUMBERS OF THE GERMANS SURRENDERED



A GERMAN "WHIZ-BANG" CAPTURED BY THE CANADIANS AT THELUS



A GERMAN MACHINE-GUN EMPLACEMENT IN THE VILLAGE OF THELUS



BIG GERMAN SHELL EXPLODING ON VIMY RIDGE



TENDING A WOUNDED GERMAN ON THE BATTLEFIELD



GERMAN OFFICERS TAKEN PRISONERS BY THE CANADIANS



COLLECTING THE WOUNDED ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF VIMY



BRINGING IN THE WOUNDED FROM VIMY RIDGE



TAKING OUR WOUNDED TO THE FIELD-DRESSING STATION
German prisoners are surprised to see the Canadian Cavalry ride past to go into action



PRISONERS ASSIST IN A WORK OF MERCY

Canadian stretcher-bearers and Germans captured on Vimy Ridge carrying in wounded. On the way they pass pack-mules loaded with ammunition for the front



CANADIAN MACHINE-GUNNERS DUG-IN IN SHELL-HOLES IN THE VIMY ADVANCE

A NIGHT SERVICE BEFORE THE ATTACK

THE great tent, its roof daubed with colours in a cubist frenzy to render it invisible from above, was pitched in a slight hollow on the outskirts of what once was Courcelette.

As the watery autumn daylight sank into dusk the mad patterns melted away, till the structure could be distinguished from the surrounding sea of mud and mud-coloured wreckage only by the pale glimmer of one candle in its doorway. There being no wind, the candle burned steadily enough, though the flame gave mysterious little starts and jerks from time to time, or quivered as if with sudden dread. The ground jarred, the air throbbled like a tortured pulse, under the concussion of the massed batteries which were smashing a road for us into the German trenches. It was a section of Regina Trench, long striven for, which the battalion was to attack that night.

It was not Sunday night. A special service had been announced, up here close behind the firing-lines, under ceaseless shell-fire, far beyond the atmosphere of formal Church Parades. It was for those of the attacking troops who might wish to attend it, without distinction of church or creed. And it seemed that all did wish to attend. From every quarter of the tumbled desolation they came, in silent, shadowy squads, skirting the mounds of brick, labouring through the unspeakable mud, grim faces beneath the overhanging shrapnel helmets lighted fitfully by the piercing flashes of the guns. And the great, squat tent in the trampled hollow was presently packed to the doors.

But inside there was no light, except from one candle on the pile of empty ammunition boxes which served the Chaplain for desk, pulpit and altar. The lamps and oil, that were to have been sent up from ruined Albert for the occasion, had not come. The limber containing them had perhaps been engulfed in the mud, or slithered down into a shell-hole, or been met on the way by a 5.9.

The Chaplain detailed a small party to fetch candles. Then, an erect, soldierly figure in a short white surplice over his khaki, the one candle faintly illuminating his lean, brown face and grave eyes, gave out the hymn. The men all knew it. And from the unseen, packed ranks rolled up the virile strains of "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The strong, pulsating rhythm seemed to base itself triumphantly upon the shattering thunder of the guns.

When the candles came, cut in half-lengths, they were distributed through the ranks so that about one man in twenty became torch-bearer to his fellows. The candles were inconvenient to hold, and when held their light was half lost; so the men stuck them on the tops of their helmets, and the service proceeded. A pale radiance glowed forth through the canvas walls, which to sentries and working-parties outside the tent may have seemed symbolic of the tempered but ardent spirit within. Against the rocking uproar of the bombardment, the wail and whimper of the shells streaming overhead, the frail walls of canvas enclosed an island of mystic quiet, in which one heard the creak and soft clatter of equipment as it moved to the breathing of the rapt congregation.

The Chaplain's voice, in psalm and prayer and exhortation, penetrated with miraculous clearness to the furthest corners of the tent. Another hymn was sung—that worn "Old Hundred," whose strength is ever new in time of stress and exaltation. Afterwards, the Benediction—and even the creaking of equipment stopped, while the ranks of helmeted heads bowed beneath its supreme significance. A moment more, and the ranks, stiffening sharply to Attention as one man, roared forth "God Save the King" in tones of measured purpose. Then, filing out quietly, the congregation melted away, to assemble for the great assault.



THE CANADIAN LIGHT HORSE GOING INTO ACTION AT VIMY RIDGE



CANADIAN HORSE ARTILLERY BRINGING UP THEIR GUNS—



—AND GETTING READY TO SHELL THE RETREATING BOCHES—



GERMANS CAPTURED BY THE CANADIANS IN THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE—TYPES OF HUN PRISONERS



CANADIANS CONSOLIDATING THEIR POSITIONS ON VIMY RIDGE



STRETCHER CASES WAITING TO BE LOADED ON A LIGHT RAILWAY



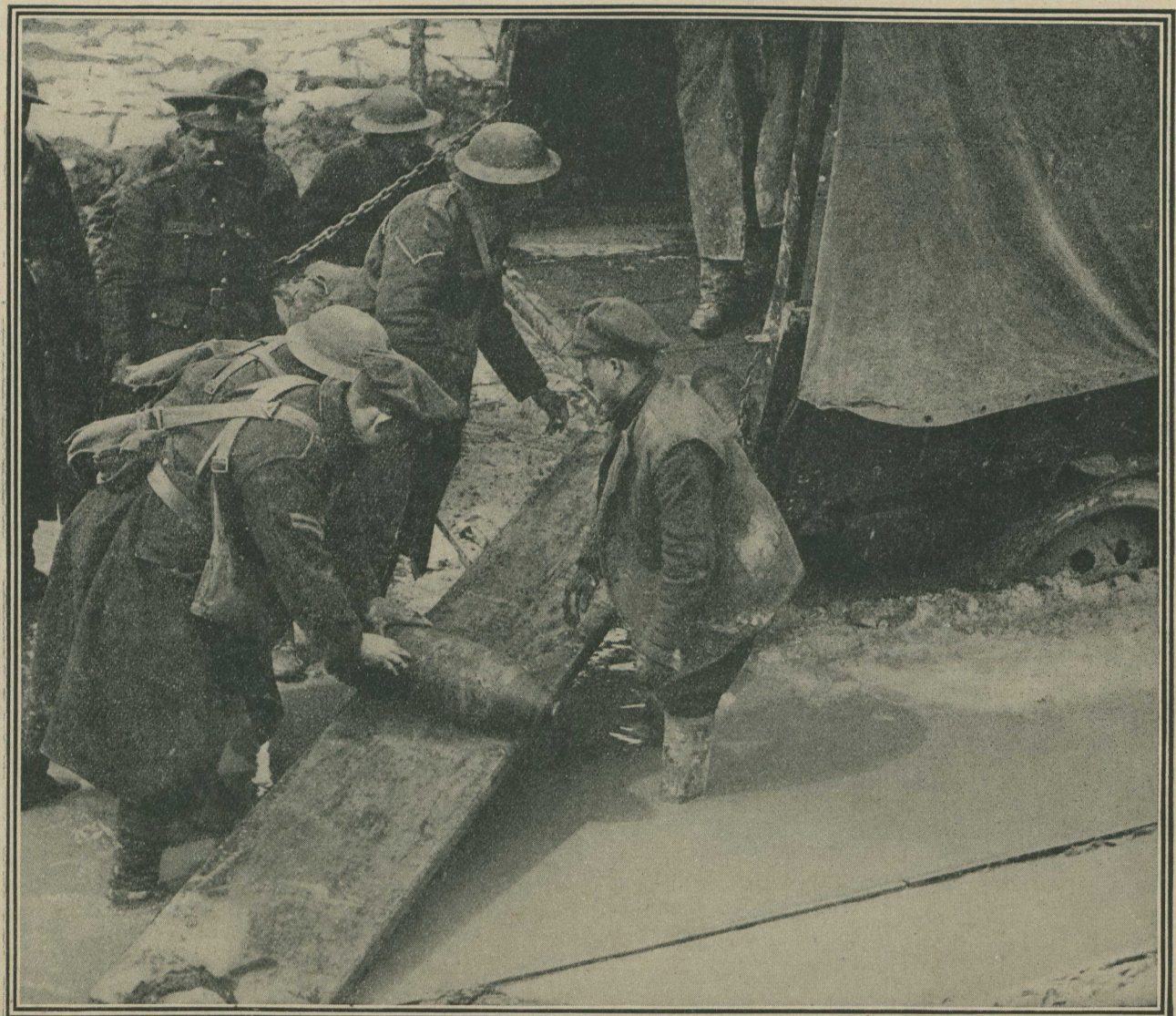
AN ENEMY BEYOND HUMAN AID



SIGNALLERS GET INTO COMMUNICATION WITH OUR AEROPLANES



MULE TEAM DRAWING AMMUNITION ON A LIGHT RAILWAY TRUCK



THE TRIALS OF A LORRYDRIVER—A COMPULSORY UNLOADING BEHIND THE CANADIAN LINES AT VIMY RIDGE



A GERMAN DUG-OUT WHICH WAS BURNING FOR SEVERAL DAYS

THE TASK OF THE LINESMEN

THE attacking waves had gained their objective. Men from Saskatoon and Montreal and Halifax, charging through the shell-torn, shrinking gloom, had hurled the veterans of the Prussian Guard from their line of shattered trench, and were furiously digging themselves in along a new line one hundred and fifty yards beyond, under terrific fire from Lupart Wood and from the ridges to northward of the Ancre.

On the extreme right of this new line, in the unspeakable slime of a shell-crater, which was occupied also by three sprawling dead Boches and a smashed machine-gun, crouched the Forward Observation Officer and his signaller over their field telephone, heedless of the storm of shell and bullets raging about them as they signalled back to the nearest battery the progress of the battle and directed the fire of the guns.

The wire from the telephone to the battery ran over ground that was murderously exposed. It crossed the newly-captured trench, which the German guns were now obliterating with high explosive under the impression that our victorious troops were occupying it. Thence it traversed the shell-churned mire of what had been No Man's Land for weeks, before the present attack settled the tenure of it. Then from our own old front trench it ran through a labyrinth of shell-craters till it dived into the well-concealed dug-out which housed the headquarters of the battery.

Throughout every foot of this path perilous the wire was in danger of being cut by shell or shrapnel. The F.O.O. being the eye of the guns, the wire was the optic

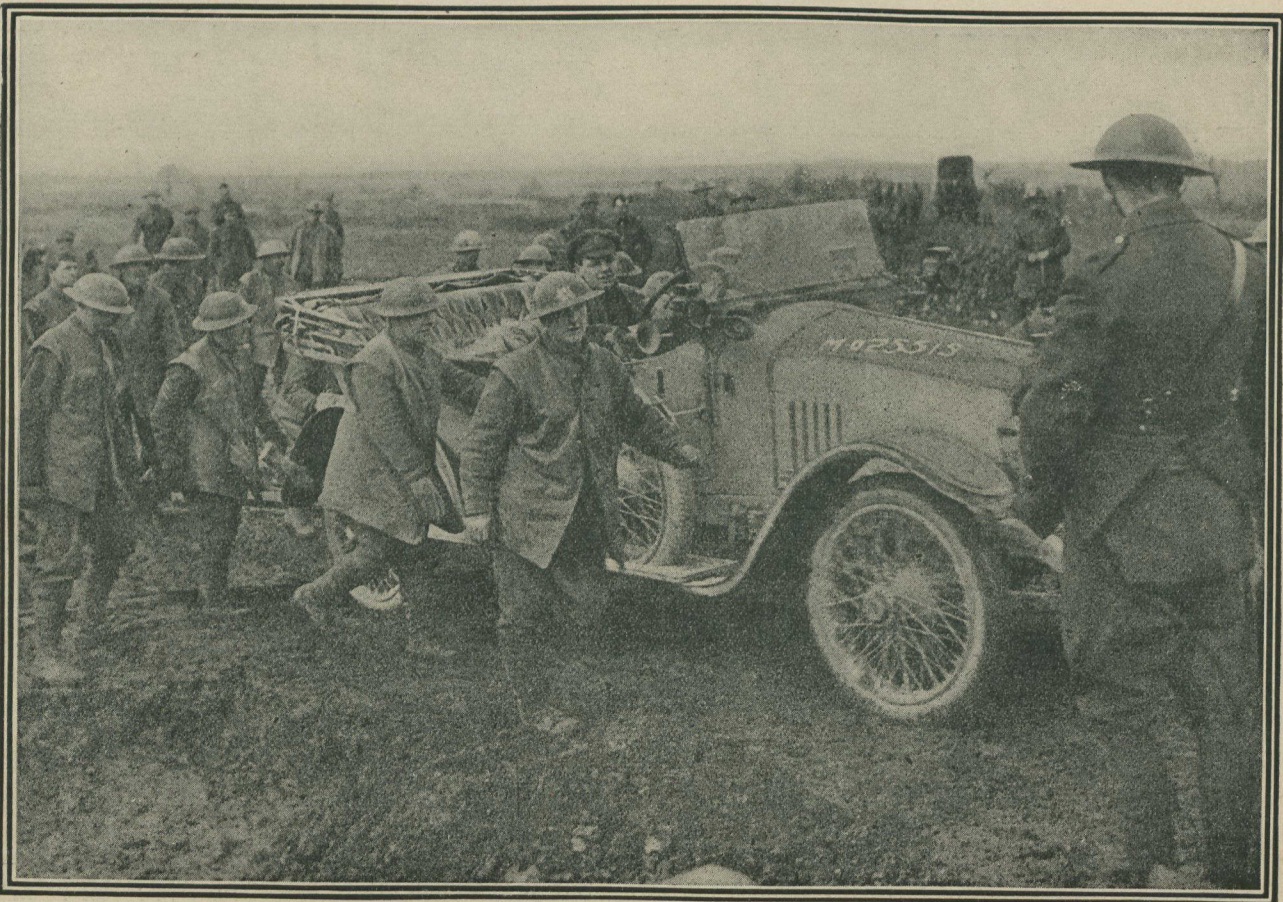
nerve; and when it was cut the guns were instantly blinded. It was being cut continually; slashed by the shrapnel, or blown up by the high explosive. It had to be guarded, therefore; watched from end to end, and every break repaired with instant precision.

To guard this vital nerve was the duty of the "linesmen," a desperate duty, calling for more unflinching courage, more iron nerve and resolution than was ever demanded of the leader of any forlorn hope. Each linesman had his section of the wire to patrol, following it with his sack of tools and material through crater, shell-hole, mud-pit and shattered trench, and mending it with swift unerring skill whenever it was broken. For these men none of the splendid intoxication of the struggle, to rob the jaws of death, for the moment, of their grim terrors. With the ground rocking beneath them, the gigantic concussions of gun and shell stupefying their ears, their eyes bewildered by the ceaseless alternation of many-coloured flame and sudden dark, each went methodically about his task, a little lonely figure, intent upon his nippers or his copper wire, unperturbed amidst the crash of worlds. When one fell, stricken suddenly into a spineless heap, or simply dissolving in the scarlet glare of a shell-burst, another came out at once, took up the dead man's work where he had dropped it, and calmly carried on.

In such a task the V.C. is merited over and over. But it is seldom indeed actually gained; for the linesman plays his heroic part upon a stage of dreadful solitude and before no spectators but the eyes of the Unseen.



AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN ADVANCING ON A ROAD UNDER WATER



A CAR IN DIFFICULTIES IN THE NEWLY-CAPTURED AREA



A CHEERFUL CANADIAN, WHO SMILES IN SPITE OF HIS FLOODED TENT



CANADIAN SIGNALLERS REPAIRING TELEPHONE WIRES IN A FLOODED DISTRICT



UNLOADING WATER MAINS IN A CAPTURED VILLAGE ON THE ARRAS FRONT



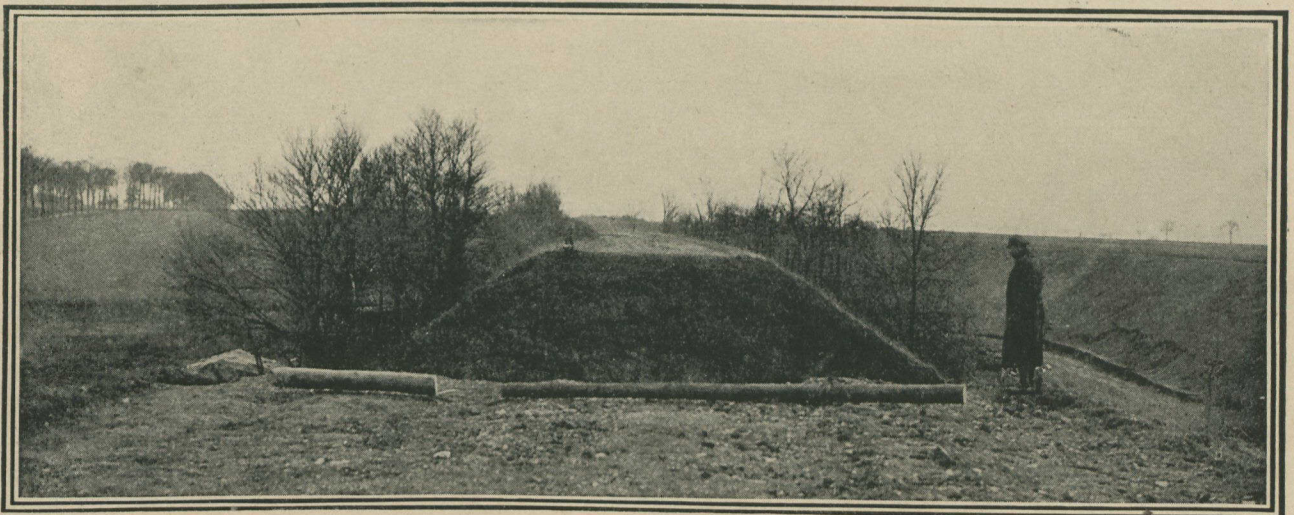
A SCENE IN THE RECAPTURED TOWN OF NESLE



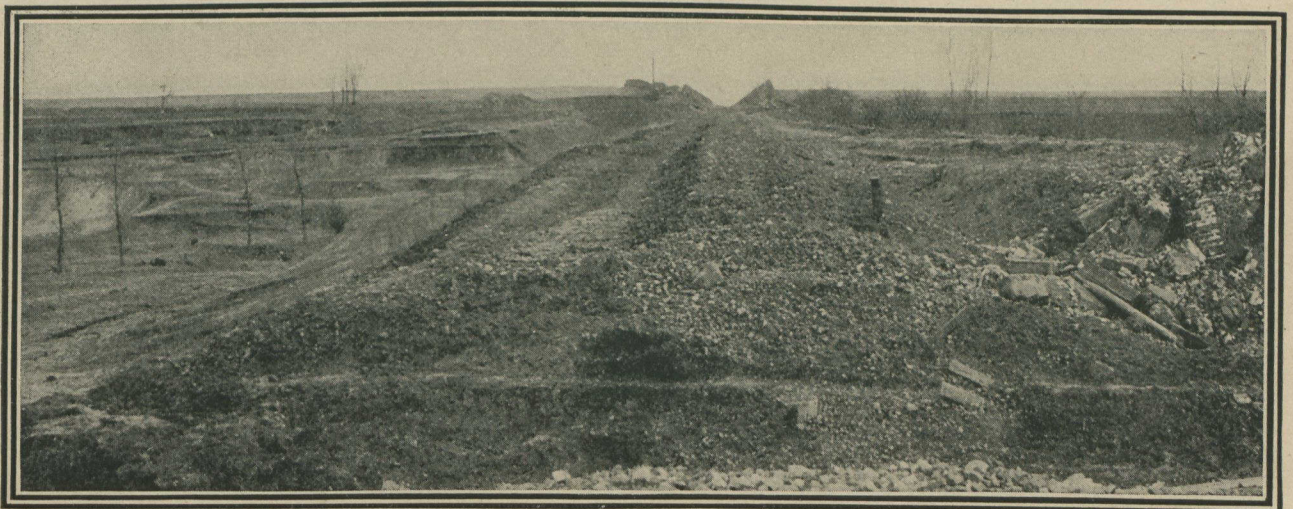
AN OFFICER MAKES FRIENDS WITH FRENCH CHILDREN



BRIDGE ON THE NESLE-HAM RAILWAY BLOWN UP BY THE RETREATING HUNS



WHERE ANOTHER RAILWAY BRIDGE ONCE STOOD



PANORAMA OF THE DESTROYED TRACK ON THE RAILWAY BETWEEN NESLE AND HAM



ENGINEERS AND LABOUR BATTALION DO SPLENDID WORK—



—IN REPAIRING THE DAMAGED ROADS FOLLOWING THE GREAT ADVANCE



OFFICERS AT CANADIAN CORPS SCHOOL IN FRANCE AT BAYONET PRACTICE



IN THE TRACK OF THE HUN—WANTON DESTRUCTION OF A FRENCH ORCHARD



SIR ROBERT BORDEN INSPECTING A CANADIAN BATTALION IN FRANCE

CANADA'S PREMIER AT THE FRONT

THE war is not in our midst ; but so close is it to the Central Lodge of our Empire that it may be visited at any time by our King and our statesmen. Our leaders need never plead ignorance of conditions at the Front ; for the Front and its amazing conditions are there for them to see with their own eyes.

Canada's Prime Minister again took advantage of the accessibility of the war early in March. He visited the British and French Commanders-in-Chief, the General Officer Commanding the Canadian Corps, and the headquarters of all the Canadian divisions. He inspected one or more infantry brigades of each of our divisions, units of our other fighting arms, our hospitals, the Canadian Railway Construction Corps and the Canadian Forestry Corps.

Sir Robert Borden's first visit to the Front was made in July, 1915, when Canada had only one division in the field. At that time the British were dug securely into the ground—and so were the Germans. Canada then held the Ploegsteert-Wulverghem-Kemmel line ; the science of trench-raiding had not yet been elaborated ; pitiful restrictions in the expenditure of shells continued to be laid upon our gunners ; Ypres, Festubert and Givenchy were still fresh in Canadian hearts and minds.

Now—a few weeks ago—he saw a vast fighting force of Canadians. He saw the men of the flooding tide and the guns with full rations of shells—the men and the guns that had already dug the enemy out of innumerable lines of defence and elaborate fortifications and prodded and pounded them back toward Germany.

He saw, with his own eyes, more than enough to satisfy him that Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig's and General Nivelle's glowing praise of the Canadian Corps was sincerely spoken and splendidly deserved.



SIR R. BORDEN TAKES THE SALUTE
Brigadier-General MacDonnelli is standing beside the Premier

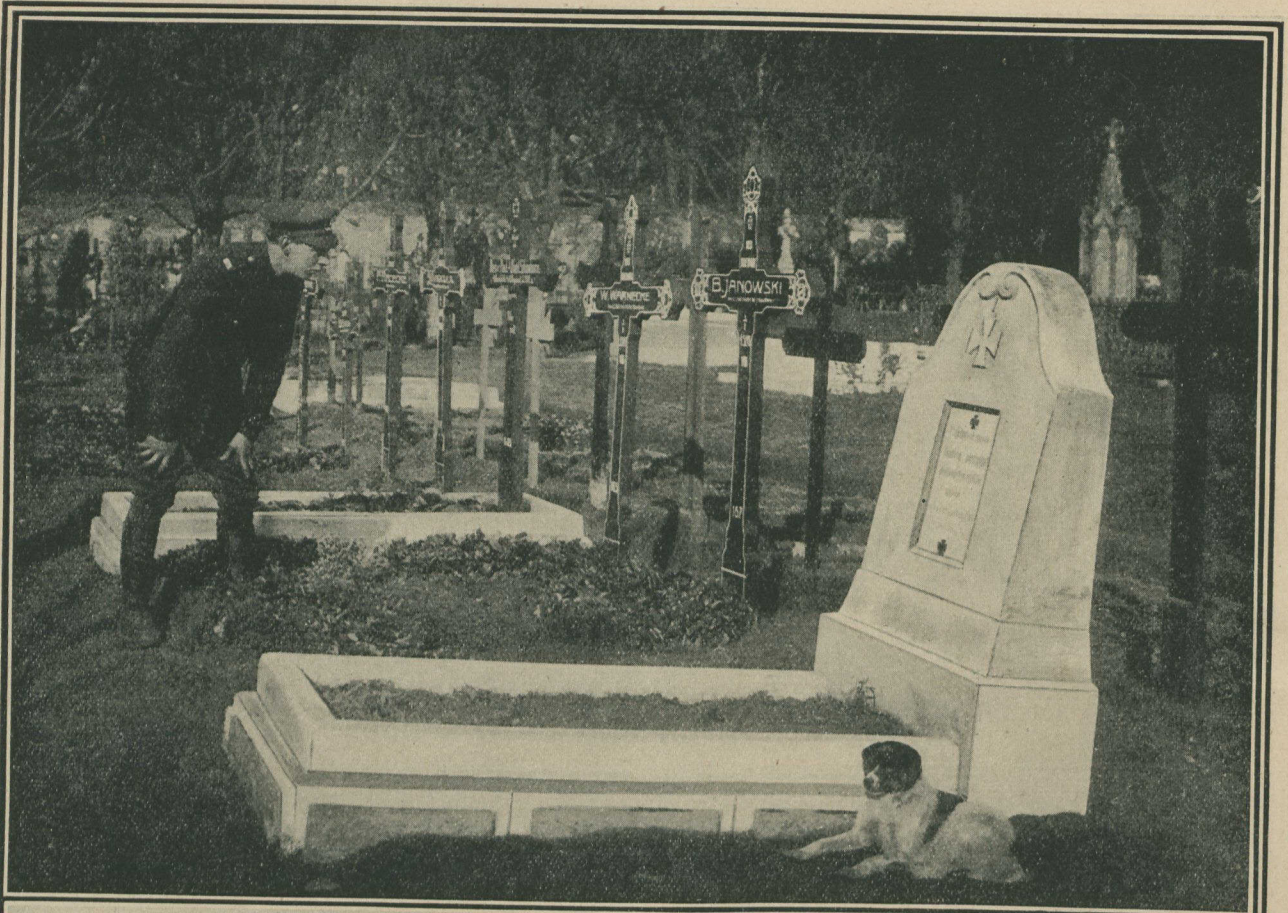


"THREE CHEERS FOR SIR ROBERT BORDEN"



PREMIER'S VISIT TO "NEW BRUNSWICK" HUT AT A CANADIAN BASE

While in France Sir Robert Borden visited a recreation hut built by the people of New Brunswick at a Canadian base camp. The Premier was accompanied by the Hon. J. D. Hazen, Minister of Marine, who in the photograph on the left is seen wishing good-bye to the Sisters and Staff.



POMPOUS MEMORIALS TO GERMAN DEAD AT NESLE

The Germans, while desecrating and rifling the graves of French civilians at Nesle, before the great retreat in Picardy, set up pompous memorials to their own dead. For this purpose they used tombstones stolen from French graves



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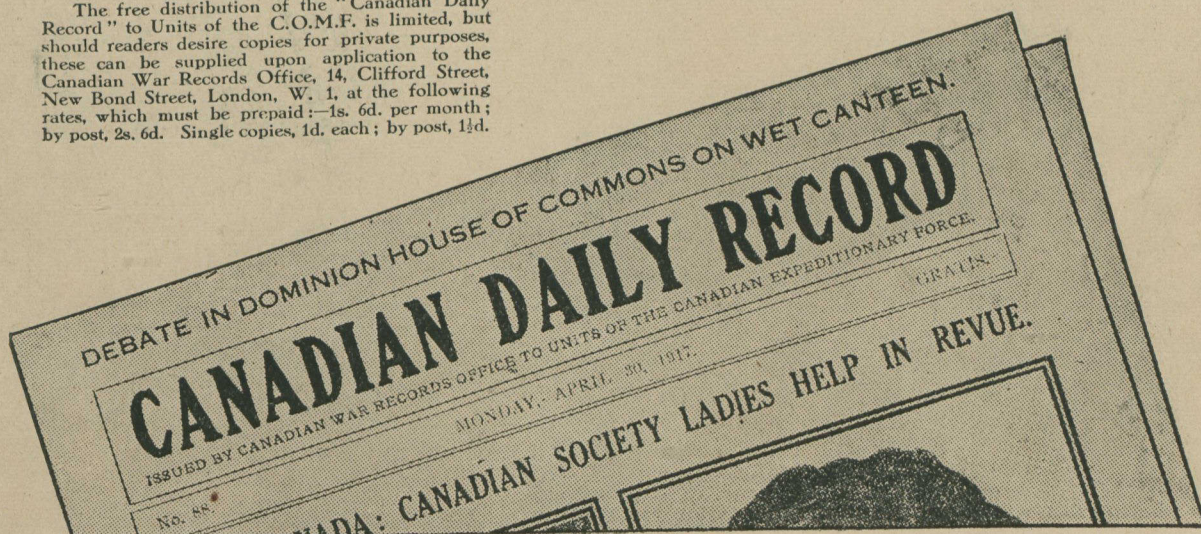
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