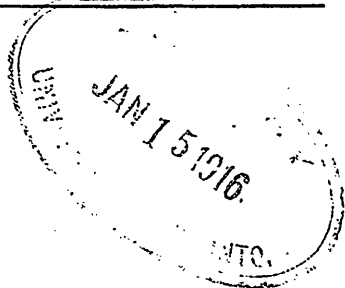


Pamph.
H.C.
C.

A Message to the Canadian Soldier's Wife



Published by CANADIAN
PATRIOTIC FUND, [Ottawa

A Message to the Canadian Soldier's Wife

THE Executive Committee of the national Canadian Patriotic Fund wishes to address a message to the soldiers' wives and dependents throughout Canada. Naturally, our first thought is of recognition and appreciation for the magnificent service which you have rendered, in permitting your men to go to the front. Their deeds of bravery are matched by your acts of sacrifice.

When the war broke out and our brave men came forward to enlist, it was felt that there might be some, among those left behind, who would not be sufficiently provided for by the Government grants. Men who could not enlist, but who desired to help, felt called upon to step into the breach, and are endeavoring to make good to the soldier's wife the difference between what the Government gives her, and the amount needed to enable her to live in decency and comfort. To this end the national Canadian Patriotic Fund was created, and branches have been formed throughout Canada, from one end to the other. Thousands have contributed to sit funds, some in large and many in small amounts.

The administration of the Canadian Patriotic Fund is a partnership. There may sometimes be a tendency, as between a Relief Committee and the soldier's wife, to look upon it rather as a tug-of-war, one party being at each end of the rope, endeavoring to pull the other over the middle line. This ought not to be. Those of us who administer the fund, and those of us on whom the money is expended, are all doing equally valuable work. *Each is able to help or hurt the Fund by the way in which he or she acts or works.*

It is worth our while, for a few minutes, to consider the sources of this Fund. Some people imagine that the Dominion Government gives to it large sums. This is not the case. We have never directly received one dollar from the Federal authorities. *It is true that monies have been contributed by county and municipal councils; but probably three-quarters of all that has come into our treasury has been by the voluntary gifts of patriotic citizens.* To many of these their subscriptions mean great sacrifices. Men and women are going without what they have been accustomed to have, in order to contribute to the Patriotic Fund. Thousands of workers on railroads, in factories, in lumber and mining camps are giving a proportion of their wages to the national Fund. The North-West Mounted Police, for example, give us one day's pay per month; the Civil Servants of Alberta, less than one thousand in number, turned in over \$96,000 during the first year of the war. We could give

scores of instances where people of small means have given generously to help the soldiers' dependents.

Funds that are gathered together from such sources, that represent the sacrifices of thousands of patriotic citizens, must necessarily be carefully safeguarded. The national Executive and the Relief Committees of our branches realize that they are handling trust funds. However much their sympathies may be moved, they feel that they can only give assistance within certain well-defined lines. The Canadian Patriotic Fund has been incorporated by act of Parliament. It is governed, therefore, by laws which, if broken, would bring those responsible for so doing, into danger of punishment. The Act of Incorporation says: "The object of the Corporation shall be to collect, administer and distribute the Fund for the assistance, **in case of need**, of the wives, children and dependent relatives of officers and men, resident in Canada, who during the present war may be on active service with the Naval and Military forces of the British Empire and Great Britain's Allies." With this Act before them, the first question that every Relief Committee must ask is this: Would Mrs.—and her family be "in need" if there were no Patriotic Fund? If the answer be "No, they would not," then that family, no matter how many members may have gone to the front, has no valid claim on the Fund. If the answer be "Yes, the family without assistance could not decently live on the

separation allowance and assigned pay," then the Patriotic Fund can be called upon to supply the amount needed to secure a reasonable degree of comfort.

When we appeal to the public for funds, we generally ask people to sign a pledge card. This pledge distinctly states that the contributions which they are giving and will give, are for assistance, "in the case of need, of the wives, etc." When, therefore, we accept money thus subscribed, we bind ourselves to expend it only where actually needed. Any committee that might do otherwise, would lay itself open to criticism and might be liable to punishment.

The fundamental principle of the Fund is that each community throughout Canada shall give what it can and draw what it needs. All contributions are placed in a common purse. You will see, therefore, how important it is that there be uniformity of distribution, and that the soldier's wife in one town be treated similarly to those in another. This means, therefore, that your local committee ought not to be more generous with you than the local committees of the neighboring communities. When we go to the public for money, we have to be able to assure the givers that the Fund is being economically administered. Nothing cuts off our income so much as to have the idea prevalent in a community that our money is being extravagantly expended.

From time to time the management of the Patriotic Fund is urged to reduce the scale

of payment. This, we have hitherto been unwilling to do. Some revision has, it is true, been recently recommended, whereby certain classes of families are dropped from the Fund; but little change has been made since the beginning, in the treatment of the soldier's wife with children, or the widowed mother, whose only unmarried son was her sole support.

When, on the first of April, the Government decided that assigned pay, to the extent of at least \$15 per month should be compulsory, and that every woman receiving separation allowance should, in addition, receive at least \$15 per month of her husband's or son's pay, there were many that thought that the Patriotic Fund should reduce its assistance accordingly. This course may even yet be adopted. It really depends upon the soldier's wife, as to whether it shall be or not. If you make good use of your money, you lessen the likelihood of such revision being made. A woman's first duty when, after being a while on the Patriotic Fund, she finds herself less pressed financially than she was before, is to pay her husband's just debts by means of the money that comes from him as assigned pay. When this has been done, she is justified in using this same monthly allowance to adequately furnish the home and to properly clothe herself and the children. When these things are accomplished, she should then try to put aside each month, the whole, or at least a large part, of the assigned pay. She should remember that on

the day her husband returns and rejoins his family, his pay as a soldier ceases. He may not secure immediate employment. If his wife has put aside a little nest egg, to tide the family over the time while he is looking for work and getting back into civil life, this will be of greatest possible service. Hence, we say to the soldier's wife, pay your debts, furnish your home, and put aside something against your husband's return. If you do these things, you use his assigned pay for his benefit as well as your own.

Now, while we believe that by far the greater number of the soldiers' wives are honestly and faithfully attempting to do their part, there are a few that are bringing discredit upon themselves and trouble to the Fund. One soldier's wife who is extravagant and careless does more harm to the Patriotic Fund than ten careful, frugal women can undo. We want you to feel that this extravagant woman in injuring the Fund is hurting you, and we want you to influence her to a better course.

A traveller, when in Australia, noticing that the boiled eggs he had for breakfast were stamped with four little stars and the number "22," enquired what this meant, and was told that the Four-Star-Egg-Circle had sent these eggs, and that those he had had for breakfast had come from Farmer No. 22. If one of those eggs had been stale, and he had reported the fact, the Secretary of the Four-Star-Egg-Circle, away back in the hills, would have been notified that Farmer No. 22 was careless about his eggs, and he would

have been told that no more Four-Star Eggs would be taken in future, unless they disciplined Farmer No. 22. Now, one careless woman can injure the reputation of you all by her thoughtlessness and extravagance. Remember, therefore, when you are tempted to make extravagant use of your money, that, although the money is your own, it can be so spent as to injure the cause and all those connected with the Fund.

From all appearances we are in for a long war. Canada will have to send many more men, and the women of Canada exert a mighty influence in helping to secure them. If you, who are being helped by the Fund speak well of it to your neighbors, other women will also let their husbands go. Hence, we appeal to you to guard and defend the reputation of the Patriotic Fund. You may sometimes think that you are not getting your just due. Perhaps you are not; but still the committee in your town should be credited with endeavoring to do its best. Do not "knock" the administration and thus dry up the sources of the Fund. We shall need a large sum of money to carry us through 1916. We can only get it if we have the confidence of the public and the support of the soldiers' wives. There are many ways in which you can help. You can express your appreciation so that others may give. While your husbands are at the front helping to beat Germany, you also can bring up strong reinforcements by helping to get more men and more money.

The Patriotic Fund assists the soldier's family only while he is absent from home. On his return, other agencies must be looked to, if the family is still in need of help. Before, however, your local committee drops you from their roll, they will endeavor to help your husband to find employment, and if he is disabled will direct you to those who will make your case their care.

If we can all remember that this Patriotic Fund is a great partnership, some of us working on the money-raising end, and others on the investment end, having in view the fact that the only dividends we seek are comfort and security for the soldiers' dependents, we are certain that the generous-hearted people of the Dominion—from the Atlantic to the Pacific—will see to it that our purse is kept filled until the end of the war.

Then the man who is at the front will fight all the better and the woman who let him go will feel that her sacrifice is appreciated.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
CANADIAN PATRIOTIC FUND

Ottawa, Nov. 1st, 1915.