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Great War Veteran's Association
of Canada

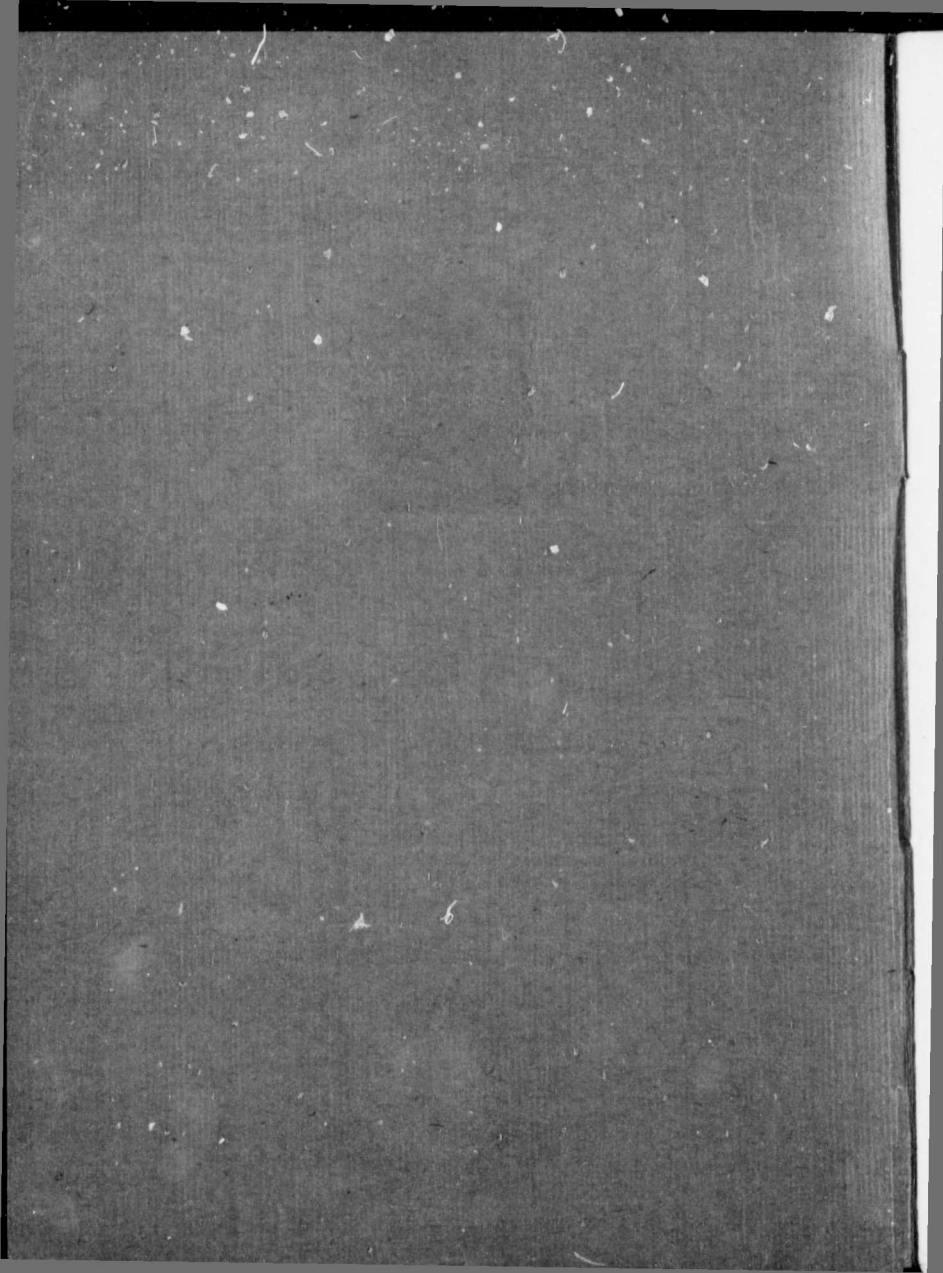


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What Is The
Great War Veterans'
Association
of Canada

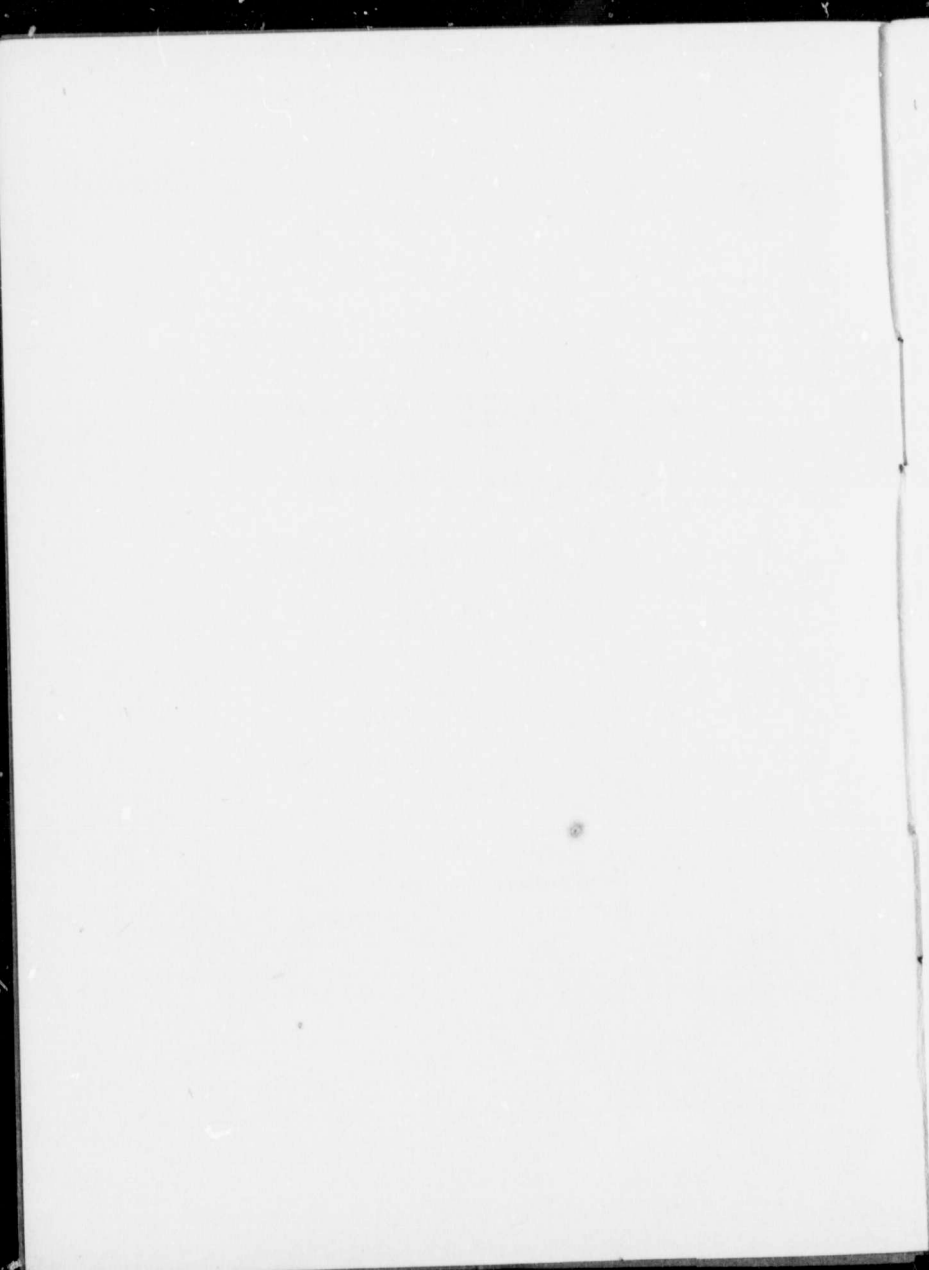
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— THE —
**Great War
Veterans'
Association**
— OF CANADA —

**Headquarters : Citizen Building
OTTAWA . ONTARIO**



PERHAPS the question on the cover of this little pamphlet has been asked more often in connection with this three months old organization than any other. It is our purpose in this booklet to answer this question for the satisfaction of all who desire to know; whether it be one, who, being eligible, desires membership, either active or associate; or, whether it be a person unfortunate enough to have been unable to serve in the forces, naval or military, of Canada and the Motherland, but, out of appreciation for the work that has been rendered by the men in khaki, desires to see that retribution is made, in so far as can possibly be effected by wise and reasonable administration, to those who are disabled by reason of wounds received, or unfortunate circumstances met with, in the prosecution of their Country's service and defense; and that the lives of those whose breadwinners have been taken away may be made as free from care and anxiety for the future as it is possible for a grateful people to render them.

Let us state briefly that the work of the Association is an effort on the part of returned soldiers to help themselves. All its officers are themselves returned men; and its active membership is confined to those who have been Overseas in the present Great War, while its associate members must have seen service in one of Britain's wars, or have been enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. To qualify for membership an applicant must have received an honorable discharge, or, if still a member of the C. E. F. have a clean record. No distinction is drawn between officers who have served, and men in the ranks who have "done their bit." All are made welcome to the comradeship of the Association upon the presentation of proper credentials, and an expressed desire to affiliate with other comrades.

At the end of this little work will be found the names of the Dominion officers, and a list of such branches as are already organized, with the names of their Presi-

dents and Secretaries, with the latter's addresses. There are many other branches at present in process of formation; and as near as can be estimated, at this date, August 1st, 1917, there are approximately eighteen thousand members of The Great War Veterans' Association in Canada.

AIMS AND OBJECTS.

Undoubtedly there has arisen a great deal of misunderstanding with regard to what this Association purposes to do. Let us, in this connection point out that this is not a "one-man" affair, nor ever has been. It is the natural outgrowth of an attempt made by various districts in Canada to establish in their own sections of the country, and for the betterment of the returning men, meeting-places where topics of common interest might be considered and discussed. It was very soon made evident that the problem was a federal one, rather than local, and the necessity for concerted action by all the returned men in Canada was clearly felt. We knew that the future well being of the broken soldier and the dependants of those who had fallen would be well looked after by the grateful people of our Country, and yet there was a desire on our part to do something for ourselves. As the problem became more and more acute, our opinions became more rounded; and we determined on action that would result in the federation of all the bodies of returned soldiers in Canada who desired to amalgamate on a common platform.

Here let me say a word for those civilian bodies who from time to time have patriotically shouldered the responsibility, and discharged their self-imposed obligations very effectively and to the best of their ability and resource. We are bound to respect the earnest efforts of these busy men and women, and our hearts are very grateful to them. We trust that their work will continue in the future as in the past, and it is our desire to co-operate wherever we can, when it is consistent with

our principles as an Association. Having in mind however the magnitude of this problem, we cannot help but feel that the tendency has been to leave too much that belongs to the people of Canada generally, and should be carried out in an effective, comprehensive manner by our Government, for settlement and adjustment by private interests. No system that delegates public functions to a private body is proper, and in course of time would become inactive and ineffective. To ask us to believe the opposite of this would require us to refute the evidence supplied by the past history of nations. In all the several inter-connected processes of returning the soldier to his civilian status again, whether it be

ACTIVE MEDICAL AND SURGICAL TREATMENT,
FUNCTIONAL REEDUCATION,
THE PROVISION OF ARTIFICIAL APPLIANCES,
VOCATIONAL REEDUCATION,
ESTABLISHMENT IN CIVILIAN LIFE,

and in those other divisions where the disabled man's future comfort in life, and that of dependents who are by no other reasonable means able to secure a decent livelihood, is to be assured, we desire to see the Government, preferably through a special department created for this purpose, undertake and direct all the operations in connection with the rehabilitation and reinstatement of those who have suffered by participation in the military services of their country, or have lost their supporters in the Empire's cause. In other words it is our desire that the Government of the Dominion of Canada, at whose bidding men from all over Canada offered their services, recognize our request, and assume all responsibilities for the effective settlement of all the problems arising out of the War, exercising wisdom and broadmindedness in all the detail. This will not curtail any effort that may be made by private individuals or associations of responsible origin; but will secure a greater centralization of control, which is most neces-

sary. It would also allay a great deal of fear now entertained that the present provisions will undergo no favorable change.

To return to a little of the history of our organization. Some of the returned men who had worked hard in their local gatherings decided to send invitations asking that delegates throughout Canada would meet in the City of Winnipeg in the month of April, 1917. This Convention opening on the 12th and continuing until the 15th, was attended by representatives of about fifty of the local Associations, coming from every Province of Canada, except Prince Edward Island. Of this movement, small in its beginning, was born The Great War Veterans' Association of Canada which we hope is destined to become a force in the National life of Canada, whose influence for good will be felt in all questions of National importance, and whose worth will be proved by its contribution to the higher citizenship in our Country for which we look coming out of the Nation's night of sorrow.

Let us briefly quote what was there subscribed to amongst other considerations as to our aims and objects, all of which is included in our petition for incorporation which is now before Parliament. We tried to be clear cut and concise, as I think the following will prove:—

The objects
"To perpetuate the close and kindly ties of mutual service in the Great War, the recollections and associations of that experience, and to maintain proper standards of dignity and honour between all returned soldiers;

To preserve the memory and record of those who have suffered and died for the nation, to see to the erection of monuments to their valour, and the provision of suitable burial-places, and the establishment of an annual memorial day; to insure that proper provision is made for the due care of the sick, wounded and

needy, among those who have served, including reasonable pensions, employment for such as are capable, soldiers' homes, medical care, and equitable provision for dependent families of enlisted men;

To constantly inculcate loyalty to Canada and the Empire and unstinted service in their interest."

This is our warrant for existence. We will let you judge, reader, whether or not we are following worthy motives. Let me here state that our purpose is not political in any sense, beyond our intention to guard well that those who are elected to any office in the public service are true to those ideals that constitute British citizenship, and are not inimical to the just interests of those who have fought for the Empire's preservation. We make no appeal to any political party. Our claim is laid before the people of Canada, and it is to them that we look for redress. What a man may be outside of the Association, whatever other body he may be allied with so long as it be a loyal connection, with this we are not concerned. But in the Association of which we are members, our paramount interest is the wellbeing of the unfortunate comrade, which of course must ever be linked with service to our Country; and it is preferable that all other matters be excluded, there being work enough at hand.

Further let us quote from a speech delivered by our President, Comrade (Major) W. P. Purney, in a speech which was delivered in the House of Commons chambers, before a Parliamentary Committee, inquiring into the different matters in relation to returned soldiers. Doubtless this enunciation will elicit much that is in our minds:—

"We realize that much has been done, and that much will be done, and done willingly: but we think it our duty to safeguard the future—for the future when the idol and object of almost tender interest of to-day may become the thing of indifference. We, his brothers, his comrades, and the brothers of those who, in dying

for the King and Country, have left to the care of their Country, and more especially their comrades, their own loved ones, the memory of whom was the last conscious thought of many a hero as he lay dying in the muddy trench—here I say, we shall be true to our sacred trust, and those bereft ones shall be to us as our own fathers, our own mothers, our own sisters, and our own little brothers.

We feel that by our efforts to preserve the memory and records of those who have died for Canada, we shall be doing much to keep alive that proud spirit which the Huns thought had so deteriorated in the British people, but which thank Heaven, only slumbered, and was there ready to manifest itself in our race in greater brilliancy than ever; that spirit which exists in the heart of every true Canadian, and which will again have to be reckoned with should our freedom ever be threatened, which, pray God, it may not; and which will demonstrate to future generations how willingly the sons of Canada went forth and endured mighty sacrifices.

I want you to understand—and I feel that possibly we may have been misunderstood in some quarters in this respect—that our aims are worthy ones, and we trust that we shall not so conduct ourselves at any time that the great public of this country will have cause to think that we are ever unreasonable. I wish to assure you that the great body of the War Veterans of this country only ask that they be accorded reasonable consideration."

This auspicious statement made by our President at such an opportune time has undoubtedly done much to allay any fears that some may have had as to our purposes generally as an Association.

We believe that every Canadian owes his country a willingness and an earnest endeavour to be self-supporting. To this end we desire to see that every re-

turned citizen becomes independent to the extent of the capacity that remains to him by his own work, although his earning ability should not effect his claim to pension in any way, but should be awarded altogether upon the disability incurred. The efforts that have thus far been made to qualify men for other vocations to which they are better fitted under their new condition, and to recall or awaken dormant powers and translate them into activities, has our approval, and we trust that the present means will be augmented and improved until, in all the world, no other system of functional re-education and vocational training may be said to be superior to that of our own by men qualified to judge. Our Associations have no intention of becoming lounging places for loafers. True a measure of recreation will always be essential, but this department of our work will be conducted in an orderly fashion. What we want to have is branch associations throughout the whole country which will busy themselves so mightily in the effort to wrest from the present unsettled state of affairs a system that will meet every phase of the problem, that a returned comrade coming in contact with this busy hive of citizens will himself energize, and put forward his maximum effort to become a good citizen, of value to any community where he may be settled. If this policy can be carried out now in the early stages of our organization, we have no anxiety for the future. In the new Canada that shall arise to a greater magnificence than ever after the war, there will be a wide field of usefulness for an Association of this order.

There is another phase of our work, the value of which cannot be estimated. No other institution is so peculiarly fitted to engage therein as are we. In all Canada no finer class of men can be found than those who compose the majority of returned soldiers. The opinion held in some quarters that we are a collection of nondescripts and ne'er-do-wells, men without purpose and ambition for better things, is erroneous. Most of us are well able to take our place creditably in any

sphere of society where ability and manhood are recognized. Of the others, we hold them to be men, approved made worthy by their honourable service on the battlefield and possessed of all manner of latent possibilities. We resent the term which very recently was used by a member of Parliament in a tirade uttered before the House, in which he referred to any men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force as "beasts." What though a few may have been careless, what if carried away by their buoyancy at the moment they did commit petty things that staid men who stay at home think very unwise,—at the Front these same men have since played the manly part, and no other service rendered by those at home is to be compared with that given by those who are the Saviours of their Country. In most cases the experiences of the battleline has had a settling effect upon those who have been engaged. It must not be forgotten however that many will return who, when they went were yet of tender years, and since have faced those awful realities of war that have caused strong men to blanch.

These boys away from home and the loving correction of fond parents have been exposed to perils even greater than any German army may impose. Temptations have beset them to which some yielded. They are returning, and it is our purpose to see that the Association shall be to them an inspiration for good, where counsel may ever be sought by those who need help, and the helping hand extended as brothers to a weaker brother. It is our earnest wish that all members of the Association may be benefitted by the tie of comradeship thus formed, to the end that all returned men may become useful and respected citizens.

Perhaps to no other Association or body belongs the sacred duty, of seeing to it that in the future those, whose loved ones fell beside us on the field, are properly provided for, as it does to us. To these dependent ones the aged parents, the wives, and little children we stand pledged that no thought of self or selfish interests shall

prevent that their needs and comfort receive first consideration. We take upon ourselves cheerfully to champion their interests in every department of the public life, and shall never cease to acknowledge our debt to them, in common with all the Nation, for the sacrifice which has cost them so dear. Our motives are not selfish ones, and it will always be our constant aim to lend our strength to those who are weak, and not employ ourselves entirely for the advancement of our own immediate claims.

It was decided in Winnipeg that we would seek incorporation under the name of The Great War Veterans' Association of Canada. Various regulations and By-Laws were adopted governing the Association in a general way throughout the Dominion. Ottawa was decided upon as the City for the Head Office because of its proximity to the Government departments, it being thought that this would facilitate the business of complaints which the comrades throughout Canada might send in to the Dominion Secretary-Treasurer for him to endeavour to secure satisfactory adjustment through the proper channels. The wisdom of this selection time has proved, and some hundreds of cases have been settled to the satisfaction of the claimants. In this way the case is first reported to the local branch secretary who investigates its genuineness and the circumstances in connection therewith, and then forwards it on to the Ottawa office with any observations he may see fit to make. It has been our care to see that all cases of malingering were promptly checked whenever they have been brought to our attention, and so far as our Association is concerned the members have always shewn a disdain and contempt for those who would use their former connection with the khaki to attempt any underhand work, or in any way behave unseemly.

Our finances are secured in the main from fees levied on our members. For the first year, or until our numbers warrant a decrease, a per capita tax of sixty

cents a member has been levied to help defray the expenses of national administration. This is remitted by the local branches to the Provincial Secretary, where the Provinces are organized on Provincial lines, who forwards it to the national Secretary-Treasurer; but in the case of there not being any arrangement yet perfected for the carrying on of the work on a provincial basis this levy may be forwarded direct by the branches to the Dominion Headquarters. Aside from this, the Dominion Executive depends upon the voluntary contributions of well-disposed friends to help them out in their organization work. The day is not far distant, when with the increase in members, we shall be able to become altogether self-supporting from a national standpoint.

Here let us say a word about the financial affairs of the local branches, and their financial problems. In many places throughout Canada already meeting-places have been provided for the returned men, where, under their own government, they are free to develop and help in the working out of their own problems. Few there are in Canada we hope that will question the right of these boys to appeal for that assistance necessary to provide accomodation in this respect. They have very little money of their own, and surely those who stayed at home are willing to supply this little comfort out of appreciation for the service they have rendered. The day will come when those cities and towns, which have provided these privileges for the men who went forth from amongst them to battle and returned, will have reason to believe that the money could not have been better spent. Operating expenses eventually will be met by fees imposed upon members, and in this Association the amount levied has been left to the jurisdiction of each branch. We would urge upon each community in Canada, wherever men have left their homes and their positions in life to go in defense of our common heritage, to dedicate a building or quarters to the memory of those who have fallen and place it at the

disposal of their comrades who remain and are returned, where from time to time we may assemble to do honour to their memory, and carry out the details of our effort to see that those of their loved ones who remain are properly cared for. It will be necessary to secure money, not always in great sums, and we feel sure that there are very few districts in this great Dominion that will not follow suit and see that this very wise provision is made.

Reader, if you unfortunately are not able to become a member of our Association, this little booklet is put in your hands with our very best wishes, and our heartfelt gratitude for what has already been done. It is written with the very best intentions. Please believe that we are not a collection of disgruntled, dissatisfied, unhappy men; but that we are an orderly gathering of returned soldiers, seeking to again become civilians, hoping that we may yet be allowed to serve our country in a civilian capacity as truly as we tried to do so when we proudly wore our khaki. Help the little bunch in your own home town, and give them every encouragement. Be a Great War Veterans' "Friend."

To you, Comrade, who are returned, we extend a welcome. Doubtless other associations, professing similar aims, will offer comradeship and friendship, and the various privileges that membership bestows. It is not our purpose to interfere with the work of any other body that is operating along legitimate lines. We do however wish to call your attention to the fact that this is the largest, while possibly the youngest, of veterans' organizations in Canada, and we are officered entirely by men who have been Overseas. We have studiously avoided forming alliances with all other bodies or interests, and there is nothing in our past history, because of our youth perhaps, which binds us in any way to the objectionable and undesirable features often attendant on movements of this kind. What power for good this Association becomes depends

in part upon you. It is yours to embrace with all its hopes and aspirations for the future. It is clean now, and you can help keep it so. No matter who you are or the position and rank you occupy, you are not too big to throw your weight and influence in with us. We are looking for the biggest men we can possibly find, amongst those who have served, and integrity and zeal will always receive recognition amongst us. We are distinctly a returned soldiers Association, and we have no other interests outside of the general good of the comrades, and the dependents of those who have fallen, coupled of course with our earnest desire to see Canada continue to stand with proud mien amongst the Nations of the world, the fairest gem in Britain's Empire.

If there should not be a branch of the Great War Veterans' Association in the immediate vicinity of your home, please communicate with the Secretary of the nearest local, or write direct to the Secretary-Treasurer, Citizen Building, OTTAWA.



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2nd Vice-President—Comrade J. J. Shanahan,
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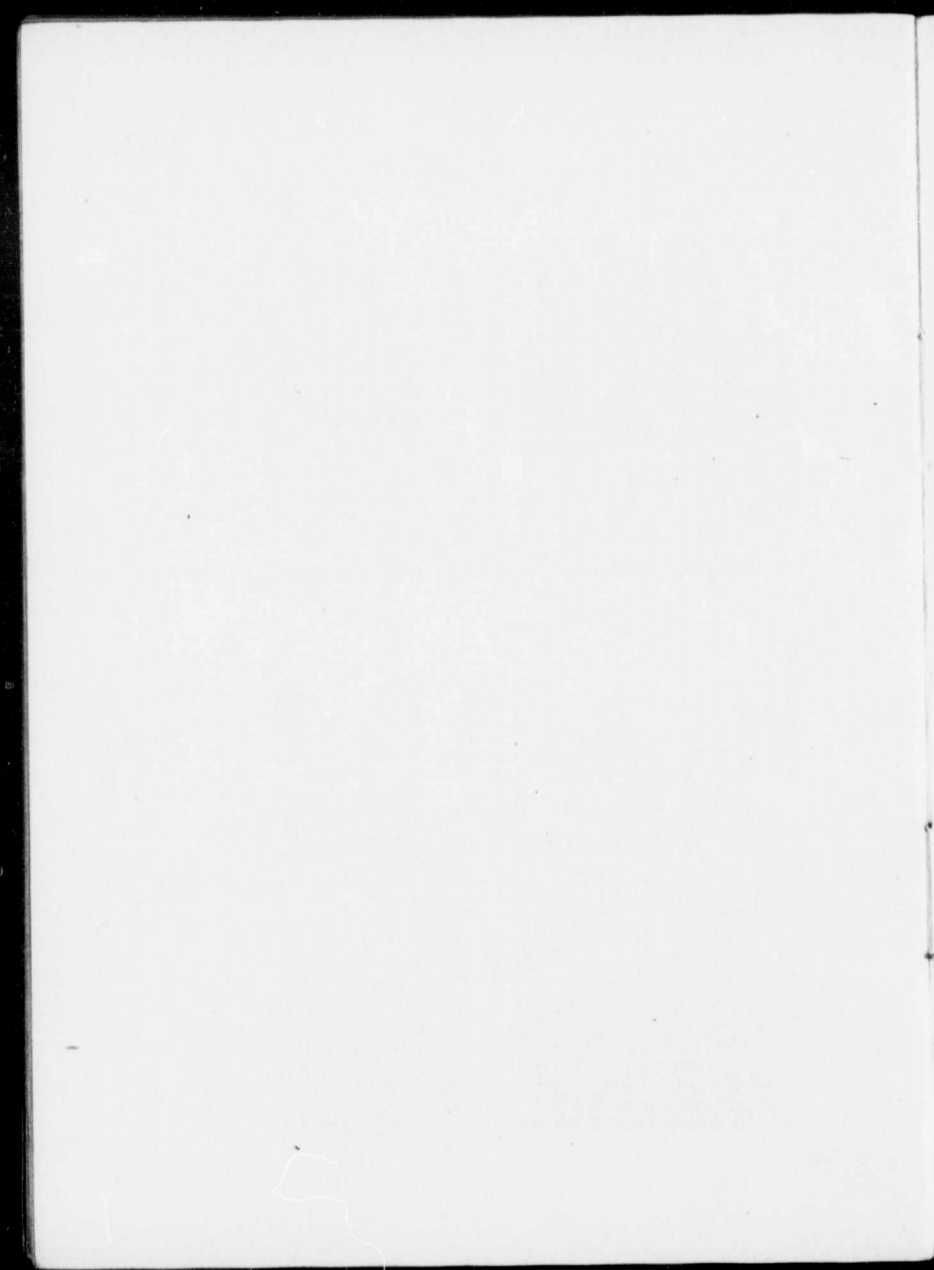
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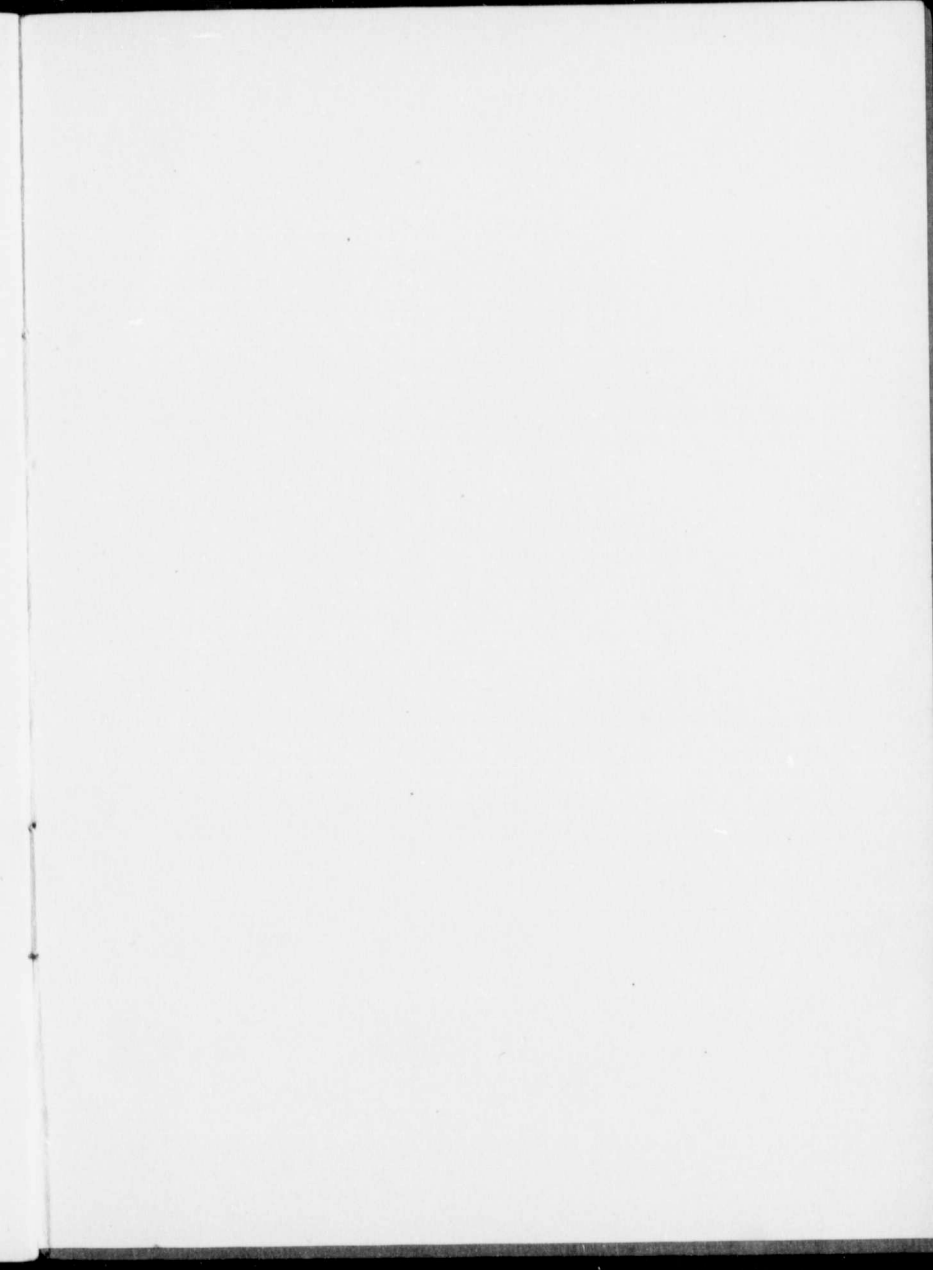
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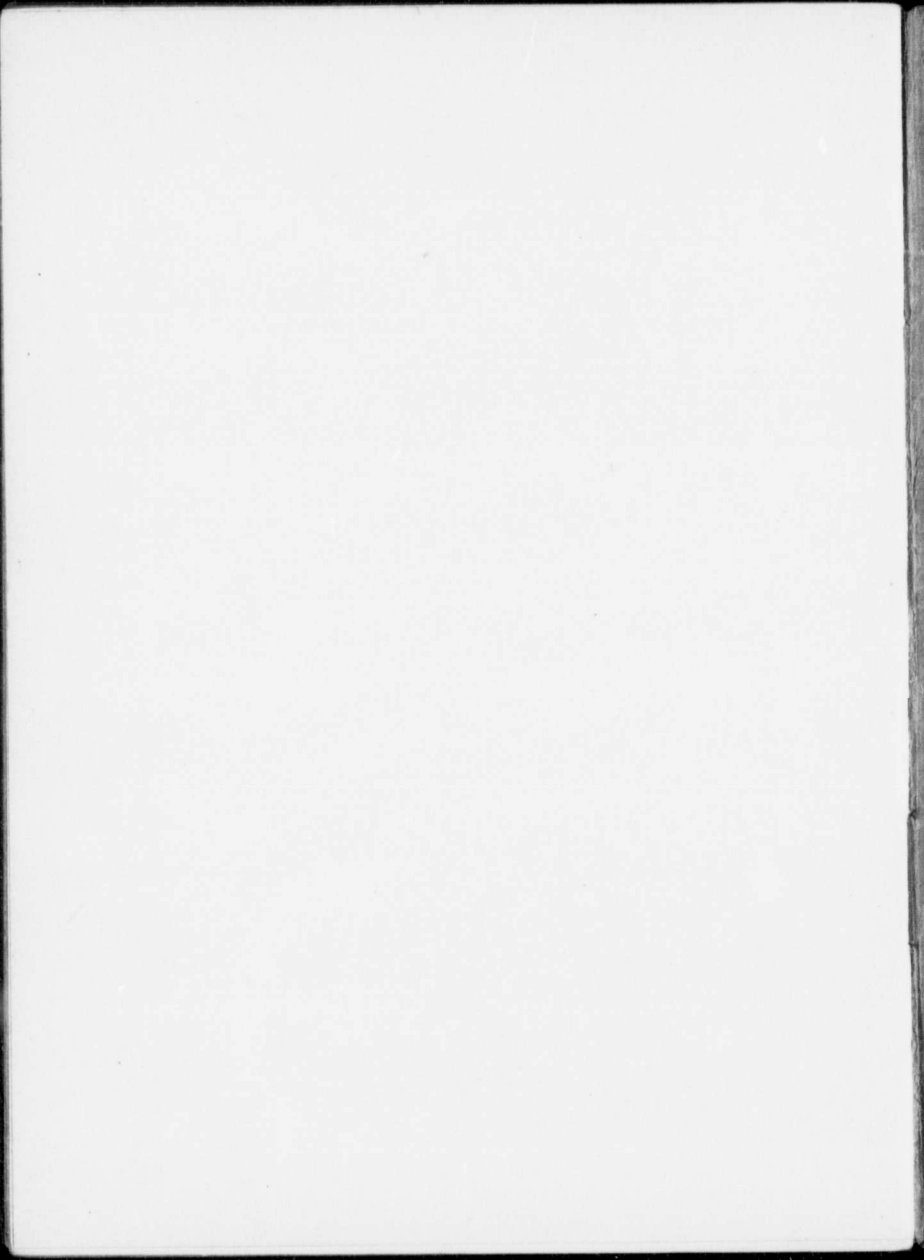


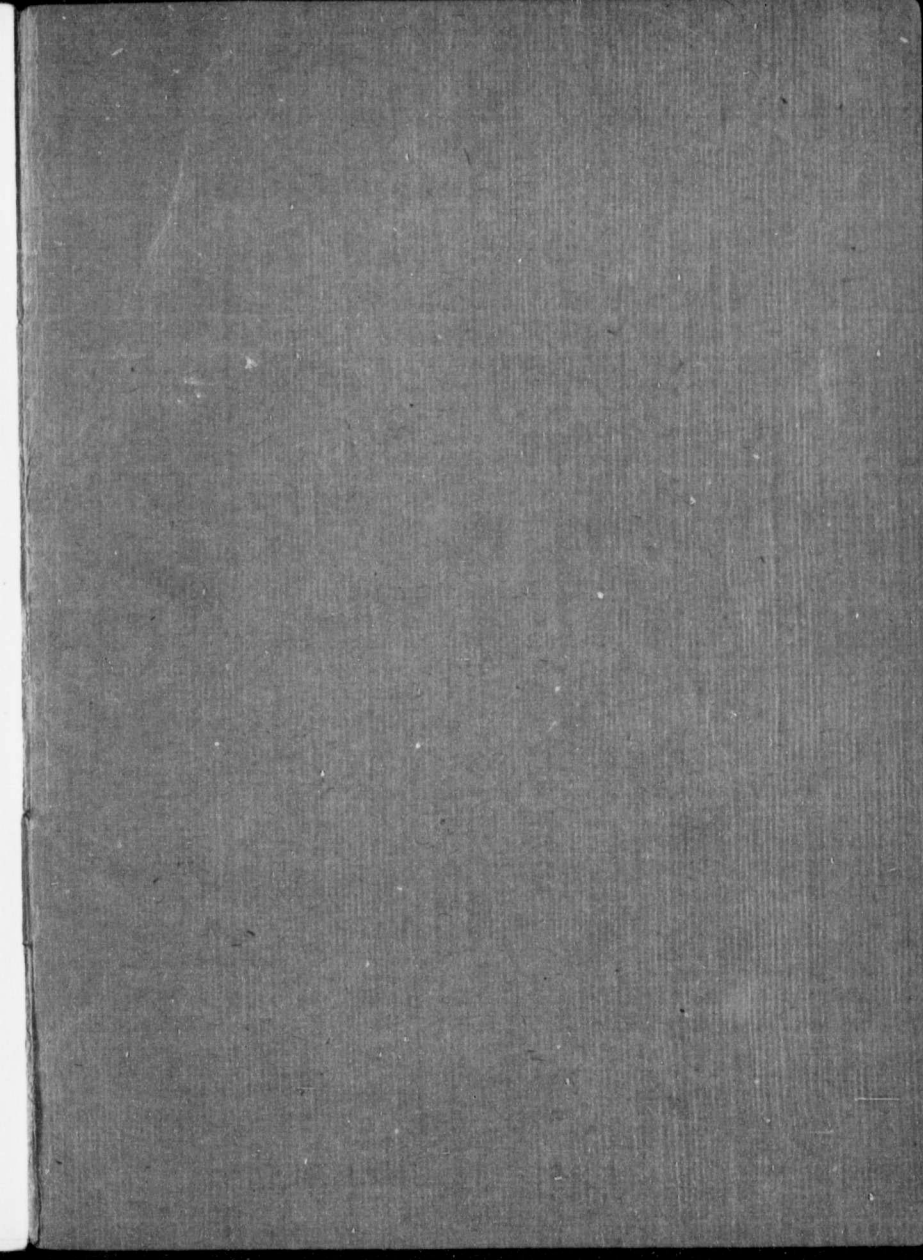
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