

Canadian Troops in England are Making Many Friends

This is the ninth in the series of articles describing a trip to Great Britain, written by Hugh Tompkins of the Fergus News-Record, representing the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association. He was a guest of the British Council while in England.

It was natural that a Canadian on a visit to Britain should want to see as much of the Canadian Army overseas. Some of the Canadian editors had sons or brothers in the service. Every one had lists of addresses of boys from home.

Actually, it wasn't so easy to find any individual soldier. The Canadian units are scattered over much of the southern part of England, and when I was there, they were taking part in large-scale manoeuvres, the bulk of the Canadian Corps moving around London and up towards the coast to meet a pretended invasion. It was interesting to see this large army on the move, but hard to locate units or individuals.

A few days after I arrived in London, a rather unpleasant incident occurred.

The first six editors reached the city late on Saturday night. We were met by E. D. O'Brien of the British Council, who arranged us through the blackout to the Savoy, got us settled in our rooms, and by ten o'clock, had us sitting down to dinner at the table reserved for us in the grill room. We had hardly begun to eat before a reporter edged himself into the circle, proceeded to order himself a meal at the expense of our hosts, topped it off with a bottle of whiskey, and proceeded to "interview" me because he was beside me. It was an exhibition of nerve such as I had seldom beheld, and I suspect our host seethed inside, but did not want to say anything in front of his guests. As the bottle got lower, I wondered what the interview was going to sound like.

As it turned out, it wasn't as bad as it might have been, but my name was spread over Britain as the editor of a great group of weekly papers, stretching from coast to coast.

That brought in what the radio and movie people would call "fan mail," but which might more properly have been called "letters to the editor."

One of them was a scurrilous postcard, denouncing the conduct of the Canadian troops in Britain. The writer said he was coming to the Savoy the next morning to tell me all about them. I made enquiries, found that the writer was an Acton in London, not too well thought of himself and a bit of a crank. The English people resented what he had done. The man turned up next day, but I made sure I was away at the time.

Troops Have Excellent Record
After that, I made it my particular business, wherever I went, to ask about the Canadian boys in England. I received answers from high and low. I slipped away from the group and talked with the English people in their gardens. I got official figures from Canadian Army Headquarters. I talked with civilians and English soldiers. Before I left London, I had satisfied myself beyond any doubt.

The record is not perfect, of course, but there were few serious crimes, or misdemeanors. I learned little but did much good. The one definite episode in which a group of Canadian soldiers partook rather amused me, though perhaps I should have been shocked.

The British people cannot speak too highly of the Canadians. Many of our soldiers are billeted in private houses, especially east of London in the villages near the Thames. These boys have been adopted as members of the family.

One day, during manoeuvres at Aldershot, I went along the street asking the residents what they thought of the Canadians. I asked if they had any complaints, if there had been any trouble. Almost invariably, they had nothing but praise. I never heard any criticism of the Second Division, which was in the district at the time, although there was some of another division which had been there earlier. Aldershot has probably seen more of the Canadians than any other town.

It was explained to her that the hippopotamus was not a Canadian animal; the vehicle belonged to another Dominion.

A Few Actual Incidents
Perhaps a few simple stories will illustrate the attitude of the English people to the Canadians.

In a small city near London, friends called a taxi to take me to the railway station in the blackout. When the driver arrived and found I was a Canadian, he asked if I would mind if he went around by his house and brought his wife along; she would like to talk to a Canadian. When I left them at the station, he would not accept a penny from me.

Waiting for the train in that same station, I talked to three English Aircrewsmen in the R.A.F. They were loud in their praise of the Canadians because of an incident that had just happened. They had ordered lunch at the refreshment counter. Service was slow. An English Major came along after their orders were in and insisted on being served first. The girl at the counter refused. A bit of an argument had arisen till it was settled by an R.C.A.F. officer of higher rank who took the part of the boys. He had given the Major a bit of a lecture. "After all," he concluded, "we are all fighting for the same King."

One night, the London Standard had a cartoon. It showed an English girl, rather embarrassed, introducing a young R.C.A.F. man to her parents, with the words, "I picked him up along the road." The next day, I sat beside the editor of the Standard at a luncheon. He told me the story.

He and his wife had been driving to the country home the previous Sunday. Along the road they caught up to a young couple with their thumbs up. Hitch-hikers are not common in England but one had an R.C.A.F. uniform so they stopped to pick them up.

They learned that the girl had just met the Canadian. In fact, it was his first week in England. She invited him to her home and he accepted. As they neared the place where she was to get out, she began to have doubts. Perhaps he wouldn't be welcomed. The editor was a good sport. He offered to take the Canadian to his home and that was agreed upon, but as the girl got ready to go, she changed her mind. She wouldn't give him up, no matter what her parents said. So he went along with her.

I have already mentioned the warm reception given us at Coventry. When a large part of that city was wiped out, most residents escaped with their lives but little else. Canadian garments clothed the people; Canadian travelling kitchens fed them; Canadian medical supplies were used to ease their pain. Standing in the midst of the ruins of Coventry Cathedral, the Provost presented to each Canadian editor a priceless souvenir, a cross made of two ancient nails picked up among the ruins.

Actually, every person I met had high praise for Canada and Canadians and it was sincere, not merely a polite gesture. Many of them had visited Canada. There was Lord Riverdale, head of a great steel company, who knew my own town of Fergus; Sir Harry Brittain, who asked particularly about Acton, Ontario, because he had visited there, his home being in Acton, England; Winston Churchill, who promised to visit Canada again as soon as he could, a promise since carried out; James Bone, London editor of the Manchester Guardian, who lost his clothes when his boat was torpedoed as he returned from Canada; and the taxi driver who used to work at Jasper Park and believed it was the most beautiful spot on earth.

Canadian Soldiers and English Girls
Many Canadian soldiers are marrying English girls. That is not surprising, but few in Canada realize how many weddings there have been. The commanding officer of a Western Ontario battalion told me that 100 of his men had married English and Scottish girls. He said they were good girls, of the best types, for he insisted on interviewing every one, before he gave his permission for the marriage to take place.

Now that is something that Canadian relatives of soldiers and particularly Canadian girls, should not overlook. B. K. Sandwell, who was with me, believes that a certain "glamour" surrounds Canadians in Britain. He ascribes this in part to the movies and novels. Perhaps he is right. At a big aircraft factory, I saw a girl sitting at a table reading a paper covered with a novel entitled "Love in the North." On the cover was a huge Canadian youth dressed in fat jacket, bugging a beautiful girl while the aurora borealis made a brilliant background. Bishop Rensson who has spent much of his life in the North, was much amused.

I think there is a more practical side to it than that. The English believe we live in a land of plenty and wealth. Just now, when we eat much they can't get that idea across. A Canadian is considered a "catalyst" and from what I saw on the streets and elsewhere, English girls are out to "get their man" in wartime.

believe loneliness plays a part. The boys don't get enough letters from home. Perhaps they get plenty at first but the number falls off. Some don't get any. They want the news from home, but even more, they want to think that they haven't been forgotten. They need letters even more than they need parcels now, especially letters telling what people at home are doing. And they like the home town newspapers, which pass from hand to hand. Councils or service clubs would be doing good acts if they would subscribe for the local paper for all boys from their towns who are overseas.

Parcels are appreciated, of course. The troops are adequately fed, but they get few luxuries. Remember that when you send parcels. Some things are luxuries in England that are plentiful here. Candies are most welcome. I saw candies only twice in England and they were really confections, not real candies. I would have given much for some real ones. Some potted fancy meats and cheeses, marmalade and jams in tins (not glasses), braces and garters and razor blades.

Illustrated magazines, such as Life, are heavy to send, but are most welcome. Send a few of them to your soldiers, or to Mr. A. Savard, Canadian Army Headquarters, Cockspur Street, London.

But remember, letters are best of all. There can't be too many of them.

Empire Expects Canada's Farms To Yield More

1942 to Test Dominion's Resources as Food-Basket of British Commonwealth of Nations

By R. K. CARNEGIE, Canadian Press Staff Writer

OTTAWA, (C.P.)—Canadian farmers are being asked to further step up production as they lay plans for their spring work. They will get some higher prices this year than last but whether this will offset the increased costs of the things they have to buy remains to be seen. The shortage of farm labor is likely to become increasingly serious and one of the great problems facing government, Dominion and provincial, will be how to cope with this situation.

The United Flax and other parts of the Empire will require more foodstuffs from Canadian farms this year than ever before. Here are some of the requirements:

Wheat and wheat flour: The flow of the United Kingdom markets of both wheat and wheat flour is steadily increasing as Britain sends it on to allies which have a scarcity. Last

July 31 Canada had a carry-over of 380,000,000 bushels and this summer it is expected to be reduced to 410,000,000. However, Canada will be able to supply all the wheat shipping space can handle and still have a big surplus.

Wool: Canada has undertaken to provide 200,000,000 pounds to Britain for the season year started last Oct. 15. The year before it was 225,810,000 pounds. In the top year before the war, the shipments reached only 109,533,000 pounds which gives an idea of the great increase in the hog raising industry.

Eggs and Cheese: Before the war Canada annually exported about 30,000 cases of eggs, a dozen to a case. Last year exports to United Kingdom was 519,000 cases and this year Britain wants 1,277,000 cases and more if possible. Agriculture officials expect the country will be able to exceed this phenomenal demand because of the tremendous impetus recently given. Last autumn departmental officials appealed to the farmers to keep the laying year-olds as well as the pullets.

Cheese: The dairy industry has been asked to produce 125,000,000 pounds of cheese in the year beginning April 1. Last year it was hard put to produce 112,000,000 pounds. The year before it exported slightly more than 90,000,000 pounds. However, last year there was a great lack of rain in the

dairy districts of Ontario and Quebec during the best months for cheese production and with reasonably favorable conditions this year there should be no great difficulty in providing the additional quota, dairy experts say.

Evaporated milk: Canada has been asked to supply the needs of the rest of the Empire for condensed milk even if it has to cut down its shipments to Great Britain. Large quantities will be needed for the armies in the Middle East and possibly in the Far East.

Fruits and Honey: Canada last year sent Britain 2,830 long tons of fruit preserved in sulphur solution, about half being strawberries. Other fruits were raspberries, black currants, plums and prunes. It depends on the crops how much will be shipped this year as growers use this method only when the product cannot be satisfactorily marketed as fresh fruit.

Honey: Last year Canada sent Britain 2,000 long tons which was less than half the shipments in 1930 owing to scarcity of shipping space. It is expected Britain will take about 2,000 long tons this year.

Tomatoes: The great question mark is what the British food ministry will require of tinned tomatoes. Canadian canning companies have been pressing to find out what Britain will need but the food ministry takes the

stand it cannot tell so far in advance. Apples: Export will entirely depend on the size of the crop.

Labor Problem
Meanwhile the farmers are wondering what will be done to insure they get adequate labor. There will be much discussion about it in the present session of parliament. The government could draft men onto the farms under the Mobilization Act but M.P.'s have expressed the opinion that men forced to work on farms wouldn't do much work.

Agriculture Minister Gardiner has a plan to assist farmers to buy chemical fertilizers to help meet the farm labor shortage on the principle that if 10 acres of land can have its production raised 50 per cent by fertilizer it would take less labor to till 10 acres than 15 not fertilized and get as great production. The plan now is before the cabinet.

Post-Office Good About Diagrams

LONDON, (C.P.)—The post office didn't have any trouble delivering an undecoded letter from an airman serving in the Middle East. The floor, who couldn't remember the name of the people, street or number, drew a map of the district on the envelope and marked the position with a cross.



The Spirit of The Pioneer Mother Flames Anew Today

THINK BACK to the old days—when Canada was young.

Think of the high courage, the indomitable will of those pioneer women. Within the stockade or in the open field, they toiled—yes, fought—by the side of their men for the safeguarding of everything they held dear.

In the hearts of the women of Canada, this old spirit flames anew today! Gone are the heavy muskets, the log barricades—but the love of freedom, the stubborn resolve to win through at all costs—these things remain unchanged, unchangeable!

Grimly quenching their tears, mothers say "God bless you" to their fighting sons—everywhere young women are serving where duty calls—the women of Canada are bound together in one common cause.

In thousands of Canadian homes, women are revising their family budgets, planning new economies, making extra sacrifices—so that more and more money will be available for the purchase of Victory Bonds.

They know—these women of Canada—that every dollar loaned now means more tanks—more guns—more planes—more ships—more of everything which is needed to smash Hitlerism and bring Peace to all the family hearths of the world.

Get Ready to Buy the New **COME ON CANADA!** VICTORY BONDS