

would be going home soon, and they had to wait around; because they were cold and uncomfortable, feeding arrangements had not been properly organized, and after having been told there were no ships to take them home, they found that the Olympic and the Aquitania had been transferred to transport American soldiers. The men could get no relief, they were uncomfortable, and they could have no pleasures. The men, he said, were unable to get their pay for weeks at a time. There were army canteens in the camp and civilian stores nearby making great sums of money out of the soldiers. Cigarettes could be got only by indenting a week in advance, and then only for cash, and the soldiers could not get their money. On top of this was the fact that many military service men were being brought home before those who had had long service. Some of these conscripts had been taken to France to march into Germany with the Canadians, and they were then sent back to England. They had never fired a shot and yet they got home first.

#### Men Form a Deputation.

The men in the camp were naturally disgusted. They organized a deputation to wait on the officers. They appointed their spokesman, and went to a Capt. Patterson. He bulldozed them, and said he would not have them in the camp. The men thereupon went to Col. Colquhoun, the Commandant. He received them courteously and said he would do the best he could for them. The men made a definite proposition to Col. Colquhoun. They pointed out that conscripts were going home, and they asked him to go to Argyll

House and get a promise from the officials there that ships would be provided. If that promise were not given by 10.30 the following night, which was Tuesday, the men warned the Commandant there would be trouble.

No communication was had with the men after that, and 10.30 o'clock Tuesday night came around without any promise. It was then the rioting started. The purpose of it was to attract public attention. It was a difficult matter, he said, to understand the condition of private soldiers who "happened to be under a bulldozing, domineering officer." There are some such officers in the Canadian army I am sorry to say," said the speaker.

"I didn't excuse the rioting, but subsequent events have justified the actions of those men," declared Col. Pratt. "They were told they could not get ships. Twenty-four hours after that rioting the men in Rhyll Camp were all paid, although they could not get it before. Subsequent events proved that the men were right. Within a week 20,000 were put on ships and sent home, and they are now coming home as never before."

Up to the beginning of this month, and since the armistice was signed, 52,000 Canadians had been sent home. He compared this with the record of England, where 2,340,470 men had been disembarked in the homeland in a similar period. During the same time 92,000 Australians had been sent home.

#### Rioting Breaks Official Inertia.

"Subsequent events show that it was necessary for the rioting if the inertia of some officials was to be broken," declared Col. Pratt. He then proceeded to give several instances of the difficulties confronting the men overseas. All the information he had secured at first had from the men themselves. In some cases he was able to use the names, while in others he could not do so at present, although he had them.

Col. Pratt told first of the case of a Major James McGregor, the resident City Engineer of Halifax, who was paid a salary by the corporation of \$10,000 or \$12,000 a year. He was a member of the engineering branch of the army. The city had been making efforts to have him sent home. McGregor had been at Witley Camp and was sent to Rhyll on his way home. He found himself stranded there and approached Major Ernest Victor Collier, who was in command of the Nova Scotia section of the camp. McGregor told the commander of the camp the purpose of his visit. Collier had told McGregor that he did not like transients coming into the camp,

and that if he did not appreciate what was being done to repatriate the Canadians, he would be sent back to Witley Camp to kick his heels around for a few months. Not satisfied with this, McGregor asked to be paraded before the Officer Commanding. This Collier refused to do, and told him that if he were not careful he would be sent out with a mess tin to live by himself down in a hut at the end of the camp. This, Col. Pratt declared, was contrary to K. R. & O., for a man had a right to be paraded before his senior officer. The following morning McGregor was sent back to Witley Camp, and "for all I know he is kicking his heels around that camp now," said Col. Pratt. "When a Major is treated like that, what is a Tommy going to expect?" he asked.

#### Names a Lieut. Cummings.

Continuing, the member for South Norfolk said he did not condemn Argyll House generally. There were some good officers there. However, there was one officer, an Englishman, a Lieut. Cummings, and he did not know how that man

got there. There was scarcely a senior officer in Canada who had been returned under the surplus officer ruling who had not had heartburnings because of Cummings. Cummings was formerly a Sergeant, but had been made a Lieutenant so as he could talk to senior officers, and he has caused dissatisfaction from one end of Canada to the other."

He next cited the experiences of a Major from Moncton, whose name he did not give. This officer had business at Argyll House. He asked to see a certain officer, but was informed that officer was busy. Determined not to be put off, this Moncton Major forced his way in and found two officers drinking tea and two stenographers sitting on the table smoking cigarettes.

Col. Pratt then told of a senior officer who is now in Toronto who was coming home a couple of years ago and got on a train at Euston Station, London, to go to Greenock to sail for Canada. After boarding the train the coaches were locked, and an officer and two n.c.o.'s, claiming to be from Argyll House, passed through and demanded two pounds from each passenger. The Toronto officer paid £4 for himself and wife, and loaned money to other passengers. There were about 1,200 passengers on the train, and this money was collected from each of them. This matter had been brought to the attention of the Ottawa authorities, he declared.

"There should be some accounting for in the neighborhood of £5,000 which was collected in that way," said Col. Pratt.

#### Experiences of R.A.F. Officers.

The experiences of officers in the R.A.F. were next related to the House. About sixty per cent. of the best flying men in the world were Canadians. There were about 6,000 of them in Great Britain at the present time, many of them waiting to get home for four months. This it was impossible to do, but the word had been passed around among them that by "salving" the hand of some ticket-seller they could get a berth and trip home. It was a fact that if they went to the Air Ministry and proved they had a passage booked for home they were immediately discharged. He instanced the case of a Lieut. Mitchell and another lieutenant who was with that officer. They had been trying for four months to get away. Finally they gave £5 to a ticket-seller for a "D" deck berth, and they got home at a cost of £25. The ticket-seller confided in them, that he was making £75 a week in that manner.

"That is a positive scandal," declared Col. Pratt, and members on both sides of the House thumped their desks.

"I want to know if there is any connection between the understrappers of the Air Ministry in Argyll House with the ticket-sellers; if there is some connection whereby these officers are passed from one place to the other and told they cannot get ships until they get the money and are able to 'salve' somebody's hand?" He ventured the opinion that there were Canadian officers in England who did not know