

OTTAWA TELEGRAM

**OTTAWA'S "COMIC CAPERS"
AND COMPULSORY SERVICE.**

OCT 16 1940

Throughout the country there is a growing opinion that the 30-day training period for young men is a farcical program for a nation at war and departmental action at Ottawa in producing and presenting to every conscript a strip of comic capers on military camp life brings it down to the level of a joke. The puerile mind at headquarters which thought up the idea of these comics seems to have been obsessed with the necessity of convincing the draftees that they were being invited to a glorified holiday rather than entering upon stern training preparations for war.

In these illustrations which are of the type to be found in the "comics" pages of the newspapers the prospective soldier is promised "sports in season," "recreation huts," "moving pictures and concerts" and in one panel where the recruits are depicted scrambling over each other with banjos and accordions, he is reminded "P.S. Bring your mouth organ, too."

The idea behind these comic capers seems to be that young Canadians have to be coaxed and jollied into making even the limited sacrifice of 30 days of their time to prepare to defend the country. The manner in which the youths called for training have responded to their new life leads to the belief that this kind of childishness by Ottawa is an insult to the recruits who are intelligent and seized with the gravity of the times. That Ottawa officials should think this kind of stuff necessary at a time like the present indicates that they are out of touch with the temper of the country.

In fact, in bringing forward its pitiful plan for training young Canadians to protect their country the government has failed to interpret public opinion and the willingness of the people to do far more than is being done. In the leaflet containing the comic capers, under the heading, "Why you are being called for training," the admission is made that the conscripts will only get some very rudimentary instruction about soldiering:—"It is not pretended that the short period you will spend in camp will make you a fully trained soldier but when you leave camp you will know how to handle firearms; you will know something of army routine and organization; how to behave in formation and, in general, some of the elementary rules of warfare."

This is far short of what the country was led to expect when Prime Minister King asked Parliament for a conscription act, which it willingly accepted. It expected a plan which would provide a greater army than could be raised by voluntary enlistment. Instead it is getting less in the way of an effective army than could have been secured by a wide open recruiting campaign.

It is daily becoming more evident that Mackenzie King has perpetrated another hoax on the Canadian people who had been led to believe that at last something really effective would be done.

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