

## THE MILITARY CENSORSHIP

There is much public and private criticism of the Canadian official war despatches because they do not indicate the identity of specific battalions engaged in outstanding operations. The Government, the Canadian War Records Office and Sir Max Aitken have been condemned for not giving fuller personal and unit information. Such criticism is based upon complete failure to comprehend the nature of military censorship. It is also not sufficiently recognized that all Canadian messages, whether

from special correspondents at the front or from official and press establishments in London, are subject to British military censorship. Messages from the British front, furthermore, must pass through a special censorship at British Headquarters in France.

One of the most stringent rules of such censorship is that individual mention is prohibited. The mention of units is only permitted under special circumstances, and then only in general terms, without the date of the event or the locality in which it occurred. It is, for instance, permissible to speak of the Grenadier Guards but not to indicate what battalion of the Guards, as correspondents might mention a Toronto battalion without specifying which battalion. Such rules as these are based upon military experience and to encourage their violation is to assist the enemy.

As a matter of fact many of the official despatches concerning the Canadians have been remarkable for the leniency of the censorship. With only one division in the field, specific mention was permitted where it is impossible now with four divisions in France. Again, extraordinary privileges were given to the Canadian Eye Witness and the Canadian War Records Office in regard to individual exploits. This was done by the British censorship as a direct concession to the Canadian public. More stringent rules are now in force and there should be no complaint from Canadian sources of a policy which is carried out with great severity in regard to the British forces.