

THE TROOPS AT PETAWAWA.

The following letter regarding the treatment of the troops at Petawawa detention camp appeared in the Ottawa Citizen a few days ago:

Editor Citizen,—With your kind permission I would like to tell through your paper some of the conditions existing in relation to the guards on duty at Petawawa Camp in the matter of clothes, food and the duties we are made perform.

When we enlisted we were given to understand by the colonel of the 42nd regiment that we would get a full overseas outfit a few days after our arrival at the camp. Up to date all we have received of it is the underwear, boots and in some cases, overshoes. The boots and overshoes are nearly all worn out and the majority of the men are working with boots on their feet that would hardly be seen in a parade of the unemployed. Our uniforms consist of the old ones worn by the 42nd regiment which have been in use a great many years. These are for a large part in rags and some of the boys are so ashamed of them that they have purchased new ones, paying for them out of their own pockets.

The rations served out are the regular rations allowed the active militia doing duty in Canada. These are, as a rule, very badly cooked, and when we complain they put us down as kickers, and in one case were going to discharge one man for it.

To give an idea of the duty we perform I will give one man's duty for two days. Starting at five o'clock Wednesday night he got ready for mounting guard: Mounted guard at 5.30 p.m. happened to be unlucky and was on the first relief of the guard which finishes at 2 in the afternoon. Then he helped exercise the prisoners for one hour, then reported to the Sergt.-Major and was put on picket until 6.30 p.m. Next morning he was awake at 5.45; on picket at 6.10, was relieved one hour for breakfast and remained at his post until 12.30 p.m. In the afternoon he drilled from 1.30 to 3.10, came in and had an hour to himself for cleaning his gun and doing the other little things required of a man while in barracks. This has been going on for over three months with no sign of it stopping.

After doing all this he is supposed to mount guard every other night and keep awake. If he is caught asleep as one or two have been, he is given extra duty such as walking around a field of ice for an hour with about 75 lbs. of sand on his shoulders in an ammunition carrier. This was the sentence for one man and continued for ten days, one hour in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Now we all know that these conditions do not exist at either the Toronto or Kingston detention camps. In Toronto they have an overseas outfit; their food is put up by a caterer for which they pay 50 cents a man and they receive the remainder of the 75 cents allowed for the keeping of each man by the government. They do one guard every 12 hours and have no picket duty to do at all. We receive \$1.10 a day, they receive \$1.25 a day. We are ashamed to go home with the uniforms we have; they can go where they like and need not be ashamed of them. We have barely enough men to do the guard duty and can only get passes every three months for a couple of days; they get one every six weeks for three days.

Some of our non-commissioned officers, sergeants at that, can hardly read and write and are just as well educated in military affairs. These things are easily seen by any one who comes around here with his eyes open and has any opportunity to converse with any of the privates. We had a reporter here for a few days, who took some pictures of the men in their great coats. No one was allowed on parade the days he was here without one and he was kept well away from the privates who might have told him anything.

Hoping you will find space for these few facts in your paper, I will sign myself as ONE OF THE RAGGED GUARDS, Petawawa Camp.