

Crerar Orders Troops To End All Bickering

Canadian Commander Explains Difficulties Faced in Repatriation of Men to Dominion

(By Major Frank Swanson, Special Correspondent for the Spectator and Associated Southam Papers)

Apeldoorn, July 12.—General H. D. G. Crerar, general officer in command, 1st Canadian Army, in a message to all formations and unit commanders throughout the army, has directed an immediate halt to all bickering and argument arising from the Government's repatriation scheme. At the same time it became known here that not until the end of March, next year, would the final Canadian divisional group have left the United Kingdom for their homes in Canada. Even after this date, it was pointed out, there would still be numbers of Canadian base troops awaiting repatriation, either on the Continent or in England.

Running Behind Time

The repatriation scheme now is running about a month behind schedule and dates for clearance of U.K. divisional groups have been set back accordingly. The 1st Division group will not be away from England homeward bound until October 1. The 2nd division group will not have left the United Kingdom completely until November 15. The final date of clearance for the 3rd division group is December 31.

The 5th Division group will clear England by February 15, while the last group to go, the 4th Division, will, it is expected, be on the way home by March 31 next year.

The 1st Division group will not start to move out of the United Kingdom until September 30. In the meantime, however, 26,000 troops, including Air Force men, will be shipped monthly from England during July, August and Sep-

tember. These are individual high-point men.

The delay in repatriation of troops will mean there will still be approximately 125,000 Canadians in northwest Europe at the end of this year.

General Crerar, in his message, said the time is approaching when the individual priorities system of repatriating soldiers — brought about by need of volunteers for the Pacific force and consideration given those with very long service overseas—will come to a general end. The repatriation balance will then be almost entirely carried out by dispatch of units which will be locally remustered to form as nearly as possible territorial components.

"The basis of first over, first back or first in, first out, has a strong sentimental influence," the general said. "It is not, however, a rational procedure and one which it is possible to carry out other than but partially. Indeed, it has already been proceeded with to practicable limit in the 1st Canadian Army as it is to-day.

Experience Trade Shortages

"We are already experiencing acute shortages in properly qualified commissioned, warrant and non-commissioned officers. In essential tradesmen, such as butchers, clerks, cooks, storemen, shoemakers, etc. Should the present period of repatriation by disintegration continue in the future, it will not be possible to adequately maintain and administer the troops yet remaining in this country," he added.

Throughout the army, discussions regarding the repatriation scheme had reached fever pitch as a result of riots in Aldershot, where Canadian troops objected to the speed with which they were being dispatched home. Most troops had expected to be home by Christmas this year.

Unless more shipping is made available now, it would appear that nearly half the army will still be

in northwest Europe and the U.K. at the year's end.

Duty Comes First

"The personal longing to get home quickly must be subordinated to the higher duty of each one of us to think, and act, in terms of the greater good for the greater number," he declared.

"The head, even more than the heart, is required to be employed in the intricate business of repatriating and demobilizing a large army. Let the argument and chatter cease, and let all ranks get down to the worthwhile business of bringing themselves, and their units, to the highest level of physical fitness and soldierly behaviour, of raising their vocational and educational standards, of enjoying though not abusing the recreational facilities which are extensive and good and, finally, maintaining the friendliest relations with the Dutch people, throughout our enforced stay in their country," the general said.

He concluded by saying to the commanders, "The solution lies mainly in the outlook you yourselves adopt and the inspiration and leadership you show all under your command."

The general's statement came on the heels of action taken by army administrative officers in seeking winter quarters in Holland for men remaining here and ordering winter clothing and equipment for the troops.

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