

From Women's Section, Department of Public Information.

"ANYTHING NEW IN WAR WORK?"

The work done by Canadian women in order that this war may come to a successful ending—peace with victory—is nothing short of amazing. It is stupendous in its aggregate. Socks by the millions of pairs, hospital supplies in the same enormous quantities, comforts without stint makes a record of devotion and faithfulness never before equalled. It is comparatively easy to hand over one's plate or jewels to matter how highly they are valued if the cause for which they are sacrificed is the dearest in life. It is easy to make a great sacrifice that comes all of once. But the sacrifice, the devotion that is literally measured by stitches and inches is the thing that tries the mettle of the toilers.

For four years the work has gone on and somehow the hands have not lost their cunning nor the hearts their love for freedom and right and the flag. No one has dreamed of crying "Enough!" even when the price has been one's life plans. The tie that binds these workers together cannot be weakened. As long as that tie exists the British Empire is safe. It is that which keeps the little groups in isolated spots knitting and working and praying and believing. Even those women whose earthly pilgrimage seems almost completed have sent in their hundreds of pairs of socks which their dear old fingers have knit in order that the torch of liberty shall not be extinguished.

The contribution of money is likewise enormous and amazing. Here again it seems easy to raise large sums by large contributions, but the almost fabulous amount contributed by the women of Canada represents ceaseless economic, unyielding activity and a wonderful ingenuity in devising ways of earning money. The whole story of the work of Canadian women is the story of individual devotion and sacrifice and faithfulness. The work in its entirety is so magnificent because the work of each individual woman in Canada has been so magnificent.

Unity of purpose has characterized the work and "keeping everlastingly at it" has crowned the work with success. When one examines into the kinds of work done one realises afresh the wonderful devotion which has risen, superior to a monotony that, in peaceful days, would have held not even one group of workers for an entire year. The reports of activities read the same from Labrador to Alaska: "Red Cross Work, socks, pajamas, comforts for the boys who have left us, letters to each one of our men," etc. Always the same story of devotion. Most of the letters mention teas, tag-days, bazaars and autograph quilts as the means employed for raising money, but a number have found that, after all, the pledge of a regular contribution, however small, is a very reliable method of raising a fund that can be depended upon. Smaller districts have found it particularly desirable to apportion a certain territory to individual canvassers who attend to their work regularly. It is this careful attention to the "nibble" which has produced the handsome "muscle."

One line of work that seems desirable appears to have been taken up in Canada by only one body of workers. The Levana Society composed of the women of Queen's University have done wonderfully in providing vermin-proof underclothing, acting on the suggestion of Miss Gordon, who is particularly interested in work done by English university women. The formula furnished by Miss Gordon was given to the British Medical Journal in May, 1917, by Captain Gunn, M.D., D.Sc., R.A.M.C.T. of Oxford.

Underverts are made of ordinary chamois cloth and dipped in a solution of 14 ounces naphthalene and 14 ounces of sulphur to one gallon of benzoline or gasoline. They are wrung out of this solution and hung up to dry when the gasoline evaporates, leaving the other ingredients in minute particles. These should not be shaken off. Fold the vests and wrap in grease-proof paper. These vests are worn next the skin and are not irritating but afford an almost complete protection against vermin. Miss Gordon says: "Mrs. Gerrans of Oxford has made, dipped and sent to the front many thousands of these underverts and has received many grateful letters testifying to their remarkable and unique efficiency. No field comforts could be more welcome."

The dipping must be done out of doors and on no account must be undertaken where there is an open fire or even a lighted match or cigar or cigarette. In cold weather the rapid evaporation of the gasoline will permanently injure the skin and at all times some method should be devised for handling the cloth without coming into too direct contact with the gasoline. The making of these comforts in quantities offers profitable work for societies, and even the dipping of garments previously made should furnish an appreciable source of income to bodies engaged in raising war funds.