

'Parade Ground Regiment'

OTTAWA—Canada's Defense Minister Hon. Brooke Claxton did quite a bit of explaining yesterday before he got the last of his estimates passed. Some of it was pretty good, some of it was pretty bad. But no explanation would erase the damnation laid on him by his own Defense Department advertisement for recruits for his new-hatched regiment, the Canadian Guards.

The MP for Winnipeg South Centre, Gordon Churchill, put the minister's advertisement on Hansard where it stands. Read it and blush:

"Applications now being accepted for the new regiment of Canadian Guards."

"Second to none on the parade ground.

"Incorporating the color and smartness of military tradition at its finest, the Canadian Guards ranks first among the army's regular infantry regiments.

"Right now there is a requirement for young men who would like to share in the colorful dress and ceremonial activities of the new Canadian Guards."

Thus can mean minds cheapen noble things. "Second to none on the parade ground . . . Incorporating the color and smartness of military tradition at its finest . . ." Heaven help Canada. That came out of its Defense Department.

Rub out valor and self-sacrificing



Judith Robinson

duty, steadfastness and all the other virtues youth might rightly strive to emulate in the tradition that belongs, by right of inheritance to the Canadian army. Tradition? Believe the publicity exuded by Mr. Claxton's Defense Department; the Canadian army's finest tradition is "color and smartness."

Color and smartness. Forget Queenston Heights and Detroit, Stony Creek and Fish Creek, Paardeburg and Hart's River. Forget St. Julien and Vimy, Passchendaele, the Somme and the Hindenburg Line. Forget Dieppe and the Sicily beaches, the grim test of the Italian campaign. Forget all that courage won for Canada from the Normandy landings through to Holten in Holland.

Color and smartness are the Canadian army's finest tradition. Mr. Claxton's hired help says so and the Canadian taxpayer pays to have the insult to the memory of Canada's soldier dead published at display advertising rates in the daily press.

The world may go up in flames tomorrow. So the Canadian Defense Department spends Canada's money trying to lure into Canada's defense forces types who "would like to share in colorful dress and ceremonial activities" and be "second to none on the parade ground."

The member for Winnipeg South Centre restrained his comment. He said he thought it was a remarkable statement but it had the emphasis wrong. This was no time for putting emphasis on ceremonial drill and colorful uniforms. It should be on fighting quality. His sympathy went to the young men of a new regiment thus recruited.

Since the member who mildly criti-

cized fought through one war as a machine gunner and won the DSO in another as OC, the First Canadian Armoured Carrier Regiment, it might be supposed that his opinion deserved a courteous hearing. It did not get one. Col. Churchill's words were punctuated by the banging of Liberal desk lids and shouts of "quack, quack" from Government back benches.

Thus encouraged, he continued:

"I have known regiments in both world wars hastily formed and put into action which soon developed a fine esprit de corps and a magnificent tradition. But it is only on the battlefield that that can be done and it seems to me a mistake to organize now, out of the blue, a regiment such as this . . . It will be difficult for the officers and men serving with the Canadian Guards, when they came in contact with some other regiment, to rest on their laurels as a great parade ground regiment . . . I think they are being placed in an awkward position . . ."

The awkward position to which Col. Churchill referred is at the top of the Canadian army list. Mr. Claxton has commanded that his new Canadian Guards shall not only be second to none on the parade ground but second to none in military precedence. His new creation has been given seniority in the regular forces over the Royal Canadian Regiment, the Royal 22nd, the PPCIL, the Queen's Own Rifles, and the "Little Black Devils" of Winnipeg.

Why? Find the answer in Mr. Claxton's own advertisement:

"Right now there is a requirement for young men who would like to share in the colorful dress and ceremonial activities . . ."

And so the hell with battle honors.