

The following are extracts from a letter from SERGT. R. B. GIBSON, formerly of the Sherbrooke office, written from Somewhere in France on 2nd November, 1916:

"During the last twelve months I have spent about nine well within the shelled area, but have been lucky enough not to be caught as yet. My particular job is a bomb-proof one compared with the men in the front line, but our time spent in the shelled area is much longer than theirs, so that sort of counterbalances things. My duties, however, take me to within 200 yards of the front line and are sometimes much too interesting to be pleasant. I am sergeant in a signal section attached to the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade. If you remember, this was the brigade that was so badly cut up on June 2nd at Ypres. I was lucky enough to be on leave in England during that period, but when I came back it was to find most of my chums and associates gone.

"When in England I saw Jim Purdy. He is a lieutenant in the Pay Office at London and is a married man now.

"During our stay on the X— front we saw, as you know, quite a bit, and helped in the big push. It is when one is there and sees what the British Army really is that you slap yourself on the chest and say, 'Well, I am pleased to be a Britisher.' Our airmen are simple great down there. One sees about 250 British machines to every Fritz and, when he does show himself, it is only for a moment or he is made short work of. Our aeroplanes are everywhere and our airmen seem to know no fear. I have seen numbers of our aeroplanes flying over the German lines about 300 feet up directing artillery fire on the German lines. Flying is a game Fritz started, but we have him hopelessly outclassed. Talking about flying, it has been my luck to have a trip in an aeroplane over the German lines, and into German territory for about twelve miles. The sensation and experience were grand. Fritz took numerous shots at us, but I am glad to say the men at the German anti-aircraft guns are very poor shots indeed. Then as to our artillery, guns and ammunition everywhere, when we bombard previous to making an attack, it is something that cannot be put into words. Shells, and big ones at that, burst on every yard of the German front every two or three seconds. We usually bombard this way for a few minutes before going over. Of course Fritz does not take all this without some retaliation, but I am glad to say his fire is only about 60% of ours. However, that I assure you is quite bad enough—in fact, it has crossed the enough mark.

"My job is to see that telephone communication is kept up between the front line and brigade headquarters—a job that sounds easier than it really is. I remember one day in particular we had a stretch of line that was rather worse than usual. We had forty-three breaks in that small 300 yards in a day, and when anybody went out to fix same it was the last we expected to see of him. That was the worst day we had, but I assure you repairing lines on that front was hardly what one would call safe. Linemen work practically sixteen hours a day and are under the most intense shell