

A FLYING OFFICER

village, about ten miles away, to cast our votes in the forthcoming Dominion elections. The affair is bound to be over by the time this note reaches you. We over here are unanimous in supporting the Union Government. I was interested in seeing Mr. Mowat's name among the candidates for South Parkdale.

France, 9th December, 1917. Since last Sunday I have been waiting, waiting, waiting for a flight, and not till last Thursday did I get it. The day was cloudy and the visibility poor. Hemsworth and I were to have a practice flight, and we spent about twenty minutes at it. When we finished I had lost sight of the aerodrome, and so had he, for I could see him flying aimlessly one way and then another, diving on one hill and then on several more. As our aerodrome is near a town perched on a high hill, I knew what he was looking for, but none of the hills seemed to be the right one. After that he turned and flew east for a time, and although I knew such a course would take us into Hunland, I followed, deciding to go with him as far as the trenches, and then turn west again; just our side of the line I spotted a town which I recognized from the great relief map we had at Oxford. It is a town which has undergone more shelling than any other during the whole war. I never saw such a sight of desolation. Nothing but shell holes in all directions. Practically all the buildings in ruins, and every now and then a shell would burst in the desolate City with a blinding flash. Of course I could hear nothing of the explosion. I knew my way back to the aerodrome and felt much relieved, as it is most undignified to get lost on one's first flip. I opened my engine and soon caught up to the other machine, and signalled Hemsworth to turn around and follow me. We were at the aerodrome twenty minutes later. The flight took place last Thursday. I have not been in the air since owing to a temporary shortage of machines.

Since commencing this letter I have had lunch and the daily post has come in. It brought the *Times* of yesterday which mentioned a terrible explosion in Halifax which seems