

to let me know that you have been up to Fairview to see the graves and I'm indeed grateful."

On January 12, 1917, Steele writes Blaney: "On the quiet, do you think the old farm would be bought and at what price? I had inquiries made at the time and it would have been bought then."

Steele is still concerned with the property in a letter dated February 16, 1917.

"Many thanks for all the trouble you have taken about the place. It seems to be a fair price. Is there much water in the creek? There would be plenty of trout in the fall, but of course that was when there was a large flow of water. I suppose if it were dammed up a pond could be made. It was a good place for fruit, there were good crops of all sorts. It was somewhat stony land. How many acres are there? What do you think of it as a farm? You who are a good judge."

There is an historical marker indicating the original Steele property, Purbrook. Steele finds it hard to sell the old homestead that he so loved in his youth.

On May 10, 1917, Steele writes: "I did not seem to like the style of the house very much but the barn seemed good. I like the life in the country and I think perhaps it could be made into a nice place for the summer and I suppose then there would be some game, or likely to be. We used to hunt for partridges but if it is stony it would take a good deal of trouble to make it presentable."

Steele writes Blaney June 12, 1917: "I have British Troops under me, also the School of Musketry at Hytte and other schools as well. I was to have the command of all the Canadians in England and Sir Hughes (Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia) had called to the Militia Department in Ottawa to this affect, that I had been appointed."

Steele goes on to say that nothing was done, then he adds, "so much the worse for the

Canadians. For I am well acquainted with the needs of my countrymen and they understand me."

Through his correspondence, Steele would let Blaney know some of this thoughts concerning the war.

It was a great disappointment to Steele that he did not get the opportunity to see battle during the First World War. Some of the Canadian superiors thought he was now too old. Yet Steele was very loyal to his country and would continue undertaking the task of training the Commonwealth troops in England.

In another letter, Steele writes to Blaney: "The news is good at the front, but a great number of fine men have fallen. Some of my personal friends. I have my name down to serve the British as the Canadians have decided not to keep me."

Ironically, it would be the British government that would honour Steele and knight him with the title "Sir." Tragically the Canadian government did not give Steele the recognition he so aptly deserved after serving his country so faithfully for so many years.

On May 31, 1917, Steele writes to Blaney: "The fighting is devilish and many men have died. As written in history, many died and there was much glory. Canada has done marvellously. Very fine troops. In fact, all the British and French troops are good. I see there is conscription talk in Canada and I hope it will carry."

Thomas Blaney's younger son, Harry, was in the army. Harry was married to Muriel Yeo of Orillia. Brock was their son. After the war, Harry would become a jeweller for the Woods and Yeo Jewelry store in Orillia. Blaney asked Steele in his correspondence to send the words concerning the welfare of his son.

On February 16, 1917, Steele writes: "I wrote your son's colonel and asked him to