

the Canadian Railway Construction Corps across land that had been "No Man's Land," but that is now French land in the possession of the Allies. I have not the power to describe the condition of that country to the House; one must see it in order to realize it. We left that railway and then on a narrow tramway we entered small ammunition cars just large enough for a man to stand up in. We went up to the front past Courcelette, past Thiepval to a plateau beyond. To the right beyond Courcelette was Bapaume and immediately in front of it was the Loupart Wood. To our left was Irlles, which had been taken the day before after a sharp fight. The guns behind us were bombarding the Loupart Wood and it was thought to be almost impregnable, but two days later the Germans scuttled out of it and it was ours. Courcelette was on our right. We afterwards returned to Thiepval which had been a beautiful French village. I cannot describe its present condition better than in these words, that it was simply a mass of churned-up mud. There was no sign of street, or house or habitation, no indication that a human being had ever dwelt there, except that in one or two places in the side of a shell crater one might see part of the foundation of a house. The whole country is like that. General Smuts in describing it to me remarked that the lip of each shell crater touched the lip of another. I am absolutely unable to understand how the British ever got their big guns over land in such condition or how our own men went forward when they took Vimy Ridge. It must be remembered that these shell craters were full of water, and men slipping in stood in danger of losing their lives and, I believe, some of them did lose their lives by drowning. The country defies description; it is churned-up earth and mud with a confusion of all kinds of debris. I saw six abandoned tanks to the left of the plateau beyond Thiepval. In Thiepval itself, there were German helmets lying around here and there and points of shells and every kind of debris, barbed wire and all the objects that are used in warfare under modern conditions. I was particularly proud to have the privilege of seeing Courcelette because the Canadians distinguished themselves in its capture, and in that attack and on other battlefields, no regiment bore itself more worthily than the 22nd French-Canadian regiment which did splendid work in every engagement in which it participated.

The Canadian Railway Construction Corps is performing work of the most vital importance. As far back as 1915 it was, I believe, suggested to the war authorities that railways