

corps, which was no better than the others, never took a drop of liquor of any kind during all the time they were in England, or after they had left England for the front. They were all fine, clean young fellows, who had gone to France intent on doing their duty to themselves and to the Crown, and they were anxious to be a credit to Canada. When they had reached France they were sent immediately up to the trenches. They were first sent to the ancient town of Hazebrouck, where they detained. That is right in old Flanders. It has been stated that England had two, or three, million men there when we were sent over. That is not a fact. A return brought down in the House of Lords shows that Great Britain did not have more than 350,000 effective bayonets in France when we went there; so that we were a good sized unit to be added to the British force at the front. We took our position prepared to fight for Great Britain. Before going into the trenches we went into billets behind the trenches. These billets are composed of farm houses generally knocked about a good deal by shells. There will be a stable, a stall here and there, and there will be one or two rooms in the house which have not been destroyed by shell fire. Shells are likely to arrive at any time, as some of the German guns have a long range, and their fire is effective at a distance of ten miles. The various companies of the battalions are divided amongst these farm houses, and the farmers supply the men with milk, butter, and things of that kind. These farmers are not young men. There are only old men, boys and women left at the farms, and I will say to the credit of our men that there never was a single complaint against our men by the farmers in Flanders and that they behaved themselves like gentlemen. Flemish farmers have again and again expressed to me their appreciation of this fact. The Germans had overrun that country, and you can see evidences of German atrocities which it is unnecessary for me to mention here; there were ample evidences before our eyes at every place we went. A Flemish farmer said to me: We have had German troops, French troops, English and Indian troops, but the troops that behave themselves best when at our farms are the Canadians. I wish to bear testimony here to the men of the first Canadian division with which I was, and I am satisfied that the men of all the other Canadian divisions will behave themselves equally well. The trenches

[Mr. Currie.]

that we went into first were in front of Fromelle, or within three-quarters of a mile of rue d'Enfers, which is the main road running into Aubers, where the battle of Neuve Chapelle was fought. These trenches are not exactly the same as those that you see pictured and which are shown as deep ditches. The deep ditches are communicating trenches. The trenches all through this whole country are really parapets about four feet high covered with sand bags and provided behind with willow trestles or basket work so that the men can stand up close to the parapets. The reason of that is that if you dig one or two feet below the surface you are in water. The result is that the permanent entrenchments must be all built up. The men entrench themselves in this way: The troops, after being engaged in battle, are told to dig in and every man digs a little hole for himself in the ground. He carries an entrenching tool on his back which he brings out, places on its handle and proceeds, while he is lying down, to dig himself a little hole in the ground. He gets into this and in about twenty minutes every man is lying under cover and if he gets any sleep at all it is then although the guns are playing upon these parapets and entrenchments. All the work is done at night. The shovels are brought down by the engineers and the men throw up a parapet four or four and a half feet high all along their line. They place wire entanglements in front of the entrenchments. Then, behind these parapets they place little dugouts into which the men slip when they want to have a little sleep. In these trenches there is a rigid rule of discipline. The men are all required to be kept awake during the night. They are not allowed to sleep. If they do sleep they sleep with their rifles under their heads. Every man has to have his uniform and his boots on, his arms in his hand, his equipment ready and his ammunition in bandolier and belt holding 300 rounds, strapped around him. All through the night magnesium flares illuminate the sky between the trenches, and it becomes so bright that you can read a newspaper at a distance of even half a mile behind the trenches. These flares are for the purpose of illuminating that dead man's ground between the trenches, the devil strip. The patrols go in and out at night from both sides and fight in that interval where there is no law and nothing but death if any one is seen there. Along about the grey dawn, half an hour before daybreak, word is