

CHAPTER VII

THE WAR YEARS

1914 - 1918

The American College of Surgeons was having a convention in London, England in July 1914. As I was making surgery my special interest in my profession, I decided to attend this convention. It was open to anyone interested. My wife and I set sail on the S. S. Canada for England. There were the usual entertainments on board; the weather was fine; no one became seasick. We landed at Liverpool and took the train for London. It was the first time I had been in England and I had the feeling of being in the home of my ancestors. On arriving at Euston Station, we took a cab for the Thackeray Hotel opposite the British Museum. After visiting the Tower of London, St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, the Parliament Buildings, the Horse Guards, the various parks and other places of interest, I attended the convention. We visited many of the hospitals which I had heard of for years, such as University Hospital; St. Mary's, Guy's; St. Peter's; St. Thomas across the Thames and others. We saw operations done by English surgeons whose text books we had read. In the evening, famous doctors gave talks on various subjects pertaining to disease. It was all very interesting.

Towards the end of July, angry talk was exchanged between Germany and Austria. Before leaving London to go to Devonshire, the home of my father's people, I went to Cook's and obtained fifty dollars in gold. When I asked at the hotel desk for my bill, the clerk, a red-haired woman, demanded gold. I told her that I would pay in cheques or nothing else. In reply, she said that she would not give me any change which amounted to about seven dollars, but that she would send it later, which she did.

On August 1st, we took the train for Holsworthy, Devon. We passed through Reading, which I was to visit at a later date. When we came to Exeter, we had two or three hours to wait for the train to take us to Holsworthy. This gave us a chance to visit Exeter Cathedral. This was a very old and interesting church. In the evening, we finally arrived in Holsworthy and went to the Stanhope Hotel. For our supper we had a special treat of Devonshire cream. In the morning, we visited the cemetery. We found head stones with the names of Wickett, Penhale, Millman but no Curtis. After we reached home, we found that the Curtis home was at a farm called "New Buildings" outside of Holsworthy.

The war nerves became worse, so we took the train for Liverpool that night. At every station, soldiers were boarding the train after bidding goodbye to their families. An order for general mobilization had been issued. War had been declared. We reached Liverpool about midnight and were able to book at a hotel owned by the railroad. Many sailings had been cancelled, the ships being used to transport troops to France. After waiting three or four days in Liverpool, we were told that the Teutonic would sail. After we boarded the ship, it lay in the harbour for several days while waiting for the warships to guide it across the submarine zone. At last, one evening we set sail, and do you know, we went so fast to escape the German submarines that I became seasick, much to the amusement of my wife who was immune to seasickness. We arrived home in due time, safe and sound.

In the meantime, Canada had declared war on Germany and preparations were being made. In St. Thomas, Dr. Guest, who was an officer of the C.A.M.C. (Canadian Army Medical Corps) was examining recruits for active service, but after a few months, he went overseas himself. I had been medical officer for the 25th Regiment for several years and had passed the examinations for the rank of captain, so was appointed to take Dr. Guest's place as examiner of recruits. An old building just east of our office at 548-550 Talbot Street, once the home of Matthew Penhale and later the Y.M.C.A., was used for recruiting. Here I examined about a thousand men, many from my own regiment, the 25th. Usually, the men were lighthearted and joking and there were many amusing incidents. I rejected one man because his teeth were bad. He was very angry with me and swore that he did not want to eat the Germans but fight them. He had a dentist fix his teeth and went to the war. After the war was over and he returned, he came to see me and we had quite a laugh.

The men whom I examined were from the 51st Battalion, which had been recruited from the 25th Regiment. They were not yet organized, so when an appeal came from England for doctors, I felt it my duty to send in an application to join the C.A.M.C. (Canadian Army Medical Corps). It was accepted and I sailed on the Orduna in October 1915 for England. Just before I left, my father passed away at the age of 75, after an illness of several months.

The Orduna left Halifax with the 50th Regiment on board, composed of 1,000 officers and men. There were also six doctors. They were Dr. Douglas from Springfield, Ont., Dr. Totton from Windsor; Dr. Brandon from Fort William; Dr. Davy, William from Exeter and myself. We were assigned to No. 14 lifeboat. A warship and two destroyers went ahead of us out of the harbor. Next morning they were not to be seen. We had lost all communication. It was announced by the blowing of a siren at 10:00 a.m. which we would rush to our boats. One day, the siren blew at midnight. We left the table and made a dash for our boats. Someone said, "The ship is listing." However, we soon realized that it was only a practice drill.

Day after day, we appeared to be the only ship on the ocean, when suddenly we saw two destroyers coming towards us. When they came abreast of our ship, they suddenly turned and went ahead of us. We were in the submarine zone and would be a good prize for the Germans. That night, everything was dark on the ship, except for the inner rooms where the light could not be seen. We (the doctors) were staying up with our clothes on, when Davy Wilson remarked, "If that siren blows now, it will be the real thing!" As he finished, a noise similar to the siren began. We all looked at each other. I think that we were rather pale. However, we soon realized that the noise was from the fan starting to clear the stagnant air. I dropped to sleep shortly after and when I awoke, I looked out the porthole and saw that we were at a dock in Plymouth Harbour.

A train was standing near to take us to London. None of the doctors had been to London before except myself, so when we arrived, I suggested that we go to the Thackeray Hotel. We registered there but they would not give us our rooms until we paid in advance. In the morning, the red-haired lady I had seen last year was at the desk. I told her that I had received the change which she had kept back in August 1914.

After we had breakfast, we reported to the Canadian Medical headquarters at the War Office. Here the noted Colonel Jones was in charge. He was very insulting. While I was there, some women came in with a gift of about a hundred dollars worth of a specific for amoebic diarrhea which had infected the army in Gallipoli. Colonel Jones told the women that they did not need the medicine and if they did, they could buy it. I was walking out with the medicine to return it to the women, when one of the junior officers came after me and said that they did want it and for me to thank the ladies for their contribution.

When we were officially transferred from the Canadian Army Medical Corps to the British R.A.M.C., we were advanced enough money to buy our uniforms and given ten days to report. During this period I was able to show the other doctors around London.

I was given orders to report at the Military Hospital at Aldershot, a clearing station from where doctors were sent to their posts, either at home or abroad. While waiting to be posted, I stayed at the home of a Church of England rector, the Rev. Mr. Starr and his family. It was the month of November and I was put on the third floor of the house to sleep. There was no fire on this floor and only a single grate fire on the second floor. When I went to bed, although there were plenty of blankets, I was never so cold in my life and did not sleep all night. In the morning, Mrs. Starr asked me how I had slept. When she was told that I did not sleep and had never been so cold, she and her husband were very much surprised. They seemed to think that a man coming from Canada, the land of snow, should not feel the cold.

In a few days I was sent to Witley Camp as Medical Officer for the 11th Royal Sussex Regiment. I was treated well by both the officers and men. I had a small cabin to myself. There was a grate in the cabin and my batman saw to it that I had all the coal I wanted, even if he had to steal it. I had my meals with the officers at the officers' mess. They were friendly enough but I always had the feeling that I was an outsider, which I was. Early every morning, I had sick parade where each patient was given medicine and duty or medicine and no duty. If they were very sick, they were sent to hospital. When the regiment went on a march, which would be for about four or five miles, I rode a little black horse, which would not go any faster than a walk. There was a stretcher-bearer corps composed of four men. I gave lectures to them on first-aid and how to put a patient on a stretcher and how to carry him and other things. The 11th Royal Sussex was part of the 49th Division. In February 1916, either the

whole or part of the Division was sent to Aldershot for rifle practice. This was a twelve mile march and a misty day. It was well that we had an ambulance in attendance for several men fell out. After we returned, I was transferred to Mitchett Camp as M.O. for a sniping company. The officer in charge was a Major Lypton. We had to walk a quarter of a mile for our meals. One morning I was called to see a man (not a soldier) who had fallen into a deep ditch and lain there all night. He was covered from head to foot with mud. I sent for an ambulance which took him to the hospital at Reading. In a few days, he died of pneumonia. An inquest was held and I was called as a medical witness. It was my first experience in an English court. The Coroner was a very pleasant man. I was given the regular doctor's fee for my services.

After the snipers completed their training, I returned to Aldershot. While waiting to be posted, I was put on duty at the Military hospital in the venereal department. One day, the chief surgeon, Dr. Moon, asked me to assist him at an operation. When we finished, he said that he would like me to be on his staff. I went to the superintendent of the hospital and told him of Dr. Moon's request. This seemed to offend him and I was sent to Borden Camp as M.O. for the South Africans instead. Here I was at home. The only difference between the Canadians and the South Africans was that the latter had an English accent.

The other M.O. with the South Africans was a Dr. Child, an Englishman. Dr. Child and I bought between us a second hand motor bike with a side car attached. In order to start the motor, we had to push the car with a run. As Dr. Child was asthmatic, I had to start the bike and he would ride the side car. One day the padre for the South Africans asked me to take him to an old castle situated on a hill which was the highest point in Sussex. I told him I would be glad to but since Dr. Child was part owner of the motor bike, I wished that he would ask Dr. Child. The doctor said he would be delighted to take the padre. The distance was about ten or twelve miles. They started off. After a few miles they came to a place where some men were mending the road with tar and Dr. Child ran into a barrel of it. They came back very angry with each other. A few days later, the padre asked me to take him to this castle. I told him to get Dr. Child's permission first which he did, and we set off. He rode in the side car which was fastened at the front by a small rope fastened to the bike. The day was warm and I was rather sleepy. We had gone five or six miles, when suddenly the side car tipped up backwards and left the padre lying on his back on the road. I shall never forget the expression on his face. He thought that I had done it on purpose until it was explained to him that the rope holding the side car to the motorbike had come loose. He forgave me and we reached our destination at last but had to drag the bike between us up the steep hill to the castle. The name of the man who owned the castle, an immense building, was Phillip-Stowe. He had made a fortune in South Africa and bought the place which dated back to William the Conqueror. His family was very friendly and gave us lunch with cider.

One day Dr. Child and I decided that we would call at Bramshott Hospital. When we arrived, Dr. Keillor of Dutton met us. He said to me "You are just the man we want." Dr. Whitestone, the O.C. got in touch with headquarters and I was transferred to Bramshott Hospital. It was a hospital with 600 beds. I was given charge of three wards with about 90 beds. The men were sent in directly from the front, about five days after being wounded. About 30 or 40 men would arrive at a time, depending on the number of beds that were empty. For a few days, we would be kept very busy. Each man had his injury X-rayed and his history taken. Many would have metal of some kind imbedded in their bodies which was removed under anaesthesia. The chief surgeon and I became very good friends and helped each other with our operations.

At the end of October 1916, the Bramshott hospital was taken over by the Canadians and I was transferred to the Cambridge Hospital in Aldershot. I was given charge of two wards, 13 and 14. The patients in these two wards were rectal cases. Just before taking charge, I was reading the notices on the bulletin board, when I noticed three or four doctors reading them also. In reading my name, they chuckled and said among themselves, "Who is he?" I did not introduce myself. From their talk, I gathered that I was going to have a very unhappy experience with the nurse in charge of 13 and 14. I decided to use all my charms (if I had any) and be pleasant to her. When I reached the ward and introduced myself, she scarcely noticed me. She was a middle-aged army nurse with a face which never changed in expression. I continued to show her the greatest respect and consideration without any apparent effect. We booked our operations the day before and wrote the time they were to be done on a blackboard in the operating room. One morning, I had booked two. When I reached the operating room, I found that the names for my operations had been wiped off. When I came back to the ward, this nurse remarked that she thought that I was operating. I explained that the names had been wiped off. She said nothing but she immediately went to the operating room. What she said, I do not know, but the head nurse in the operating room never spoke to me again. At the end of the month, when I was leaving, in bidding goodbye to the nurse, she seemed to be quite human.

It was at Witley Camp that a very serious accident happened one day. A company (250 men) was being instructed in the use of a bomb, I think it was called the corn-cob. It fitted in the muzzle of the rifle and with a small charge could be sent, say fifty yards, and exploded on landing. This time, the bomb exploded as it left the rifle. The result was terrible; about forty men were either killed or wounded. I was on duty then and came as quickly as I could to the scene. Ambulances were called from Frenchem Hospital. I did emergency dressing on the wounded and sent them on to the hospital. One reason why I went overseas was that I had had 15 years experience as an M.C.R. surgeon and in this capacity had attended a great many injured and also I had made surgery my special study. Up to now, my usefulness had been wasted.

I sent in my resignation because the year was up and they had all the doctors they wanted. On arriving at the Thackeray in London, the same crowd who came over on the Orduna with me began to come in - Totten, Racey, Douglas and Davie Wilson. We took the train for Liverpool and boarded the S. S. Mauretania. After a delay of a few days, we set sail and came through the submarine zone again. The sea was rough and we were seasick but we arrived at last in Montreal. My wife was there to meet me. On reaching home, I bought a Maxwell car and settled down to pick up my practice. Dr. A.C. had kept everything as I had left it.

The Workmen's Compensation Board had been established only a short time, with headquarters in the old Normal School building in Toronto. Sam Price, a lawyer from St. Thomas, and a friend of mine was the first president. Mr. L. W. Miller, a former president of the R.R.H.A. was on the claims department of the Board. In March of 1917, Mr. Miller came to St. Thomas and asked me to be a Medical Officer for the Board at a salary of \$4,000 a year. The offer was an honour and I accepted. My work was to examine the reports of the doctors on accident victims disabled while at work, and their estimates of the duration of the disability. We had an X-ray, so we often had the claimant come in for an examination and X-ray. There was an interesting angle to this because we met all the different nationalities and were able to study the traits characteristic of each, and also their honesty. We found the Scots to be the most honest, the English next, and the Europeans not so good.

At first, I stayed at the Elliott House until my family was able to join me, which was after school had closed for the summer. We rented the house in St. Thomas to a Mr. Gough. The office at 550 Talbot Street was sold to Dr. A.C. We could not find a house for rent in Toronto so we bought one at 368 Walmer Road for \$12,500, and settled down to life in Toronto. The children went to school but they missed their old friends. The winter of 1917-18 turned out to be a very cold one. Coal was scarce and hard to buy because of the war. One day, the coalman who had promised to deliver coal to our house failed to appear. My wife telephoned me to say that the coal had not been delivered and the furnace was out. I hurried home and on my way called at the coal office. The man said that he could not deliver until morning. I was given a couple of bags of coal to take home and with them managed to get the furnace going for the night.

During the following summer I had a week's holiday, so we took a motor trip back to St. Thomas. Though it was a drive of about 145 miles, it took us all day at that time. We stayed at Hillcrest Inn at Port Stanley. It was so nice to meet our old friends that we were all homesick. When we returned to Toronto, it was not like going home. Except for the Rowland family who lived next door to us, most of our friends lived miles away. Finally we decided to return to St. Thomas and I sent in my resignation to the Board. The house on Walmer Road was sold for what we paid for it. Dr. A.C. had not rented the office at 550 Talbot. He said, "Curtis will be back".

He proved to be right and I bought my share of the office for the same price that I had sold it to him. Dr. A.C. was one of the finest men I had ever met. We moved back to St. Thomas in August, 1918. As Mr. Price could not get anyone to take my place at first, I stayed on in Toronto until October.

CHAPTER VIII

CIVIC AFFAIRS, INCLUDING THE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PROJECT

1919 - 1925

When I came home, one of the first things I did, was to attend an indignation meeting of the doctors in regard to the management of the Amasa Wood Hospital. Miss Bertha Miller had been superintendent for several years. She was capable, but a mild dictator. Her assistant, Miss Stella Stewart was a very capable, hard working nurse. They both had been discharged by a much less capable Board. The woman who was engaged by the Board to take their place had no experience in hospital management. In fact, she had not nursed for ten years. At this meeting, the doctors passed a strong resolution demanding a new hospital superintendent. Soon afterward Miss Weldon and her assistant, Miss Lucille Armstrong were engaged. Miss Weldon was very gracious and pleasant to the public, the patients and the doctors alike. Miss Armstrong was the very efficient nurse, which pleased the doctors.

One day, Bert Doherty, who was the City Clerk, came across to the office from the City Hall and asked me to be a candidate for alderman for the coming year. This took me by surprise and I refused. When I found out that they were trying to get some new men on the City Council and that Charlie Raven and Frank Lemon would run if I did, I consented on condition that we change the Hospital Board to a Commission elected by the people. The election was held in December and Charlie Raven headed the polls and I came second.

At the first meeting of the new City Council held early in 1919, Ed Horton was starting his second year as Mayor. The chairmen for the following committees were chosen as follows: Charles Raven for Finance, No. 1; J. D. Curtis, Board of Works, No. 2; George Sloggett, Fire Department, No. 3; Frank Brinkman, Board of Health, No. 4; Colin Walker, Street Railway, No. 5; John Handford, Gas Works, No. 6. Other aldermen on the Council were Edgar Sanders, Frank Lemon, Angus Taylor, John Lane and Fred Brooks. Dr. A. D. McKillop was the Medical Officer of Health. I was appointed chairman of a committee to confer with a similar group from the County Council with the idea of building a new hospital in St. Thomas. There was a committee also appointed to meet the returning soldiers, composed of Lemon, Sanders, Raven, Taylor and Curtis.

The Amasa Wood Hospital had been under the management of the mayor, two aldermen and a doctor. It was not a satisfactory arrangement, because the mayor and aldermen were often changed with each year. The new Council made a resolution to put the management of the hospital under a Commission elected by the people. The first members of the new Board were Chant, W. R. Coulter and James Bristow. The following year, E. A. Horton, James Bristow and W. R. Coulter were elected by the people. They, with the mayor managed the hospital for many years with great satisfaction to the public.

When I first started practice in St. Thomas in 1894, Talbot Street was paved with cedar blocks. Water would get under the blocks and when frost came, the blocks would heave and the pavement became very rough. The next type of pavement on Talbot Street was vitrified brick. Every time a gas pipe, water main or sewer went wrong, the bricks would have to be taken up, but they were never put back the way they were before. This and the heaving with the frost made Talbot Street the roughest main street in Ontario. In 1918, the streets, except Horton and Malakoff, which were still brick, were mostly macadam or just plain gravel. The No. 2 committee (Board of Works) decided to improve the streets and that Talbot Street be paved with asphalt.

Ordinarily in such a project, the property owners concerned are contacted to sign a petition and if two thirds sign the Council is empowered to proceed. To get two thirds of the property owners on Talbot Street to sign a petition would be an endless job. We decided to pass a bylaw by two thirds of the Council instead. We also called a meeting of the ratepayers, but only those opposed came to the meeting. On March 4, 1919, a large number of property owners from the west end of Talbot Street attended the Council meeting with a petition asking that Talbot Street from Stanley to Pleasant Street be paved with macadam. At the following meeting of the Council, in considering the proposal, some of the aldermen were not in favour of doing anything to the street. They thought the street was all right as it was. Others felt sorry for the west end property owners. Several of us decided to take up a subscription to help them with their taxes. I gave fifty dollars. I have forgotten the amount subscribed, but I think it was about a thousand.

The contract for excavating and laying a cement foundation was let to the Ponsford Construction Company and the laying of the asphalt to the Asphalt Company. When the Ponsford firm began the excavations in the west end of Talbot Street an injunction was issued against them and the work had to stop. The men then moved their equipment to the east end of Talbot, opposite First Avenue. One morning, Stan Gilbert of the Canadian Iron Foundry called me to come and look at the excavation at the Woodworth Avenue intersection of Talbot Street, just opposite the foundry. It looked like a deep ditch. I went to the City Engineer, Mr. Ferguson and told him that it did not look right. He said that he took his elevation from the sidewalk. I told him that we were building a street and were not interested in the sidewalk. The next day we received his resignation. Mr. James Bell was appointed in his place until December 1919, when Mr. Warren Miller was appointed City Engineer with Mr. Bell as consultant for one year. When Mr. Bell came on the job, he ordered the excavation to be filled eleven inches.

When the excavating had been completed as far as Balaclava Street and the cement mixer installed in place, those in charge of the cement mixing were told that they could not use city water, because the reservoir was low. This was a severe blow to us because the work would then have to be postponed until Spring. An idea came to me that we might be able to get water from Kettle Creek with the use of a large flusher truck which had been purchased to flush the dirt off Talbot Street. I started out to hunt for water. In coming past the pork factory on Gravel Road just before coming to the C. and O. tracks, Bill Moody asked me what I was looking for. I said "Water". He replied, "You can have all you want here". So we had the flusher sent to haul the water for the cement mixer.

Another problem which we had, was in connection with the street car rails. At that time, the street railway ran from Pleasant Street to First Avenue on the Talbot Street section. This was before motor bus transport had begun. In paving Talbot Street, we had to install new tracks. After four years of war, countries were short of almost everything and rails were scarce. We placed our order for rails from a factory in Ohio but they could not deliver. We had to have rails trucked from the factory to Erie, Pennsylvania, then placed on a boat to Port Stanley and thence trucked to St. Thomas.

By the time the asphalt had been laid in the east end of Talbot, the injunction against the west end had been defeated and the work of paving in that part was able to proceed. Of course, as we went along, all sewer, gas and water connections had to be carefully examined and renewed if necessary. When snow began to fall in November, of course the work had to stop. It had been carried as far as the Post Office, to be completed the following year.

In the December civic elections, there were several changes in the City Council. Frank Brinkman was the Mayor. The following were appointed chairmen of their respective committees - Charlie Raven, No. 1, Finance; J. D. Curtis, No. 2, Board of Works; George Hill, No. 3, Fire Dep't.; Charles Butler, No. 4, Board of Health; Colin Walker, No. 5, Street Railway; Frank Lemon, No. 6, Gas Works. Angus Taylor was chairman for the Reception committee. Other aldermen were Bill McIntyre, Matt Penhale, Pat Meehan and Bob Middleton.

During the next few years, asphalt pavements were laid on several streets, but all were by petition. Among them were Metcalf, Rosebery Place, Gladstone Ave., White Street as far as the tracks, Hiawatha Street, St. Catharine and Kains. There were also many streets laid in macadam. In all the new streets, storm sewers were installed when they were in the plan.

The Council of 1921 was pretty much the same as the one of the year before. In 1922, there were several changes. Charlie Raven was elected Mayor. Bill McIntyre was chairman of No. 1 committee and Bill Stokes, chairman of No. 3 committee. The Council of 1923 had Charlie Raven as Mayor again with Curtis, Lemon, Butler, McIntyre, Meehan, Jagoe, Sloggett, Brinkman and A. A. Sutherland on the Council.

By this time, after five years of strenuous work on the Council, I felt that I had done my duty as a citizen of St. Thomas, so I did not run in the 1924 elections. I would like to pay a tribute to the splendid fellows with whom I was associated in the Council. Of special mention were Charlie Raven, Frank Lemon, Bill McIntyre, Charlie Butler, Colin Walker, George Sloggett and several others.

Now, to come back to the hospital question. In the 1919 Council, I had been appointed chairman of a committee whose responsibility was in connection with the building of a new hospital for St. Thomas. The other members were E. A. Horton, Charles Butler, William McIntyre, Frank Lemon and Matt Penhale. We hoped to get the County to join the city in the project. We had obtained letters patent with Judge Ermatinger and Judge Colter as Governors. Ed Horton and a few others and I went out into the county to talk to the farmers about the scheme. A deputation also waited on the County Council when it was in session. At this meeting, Ed Horton, Charlie Butler and I all gave short talks advocating a new hospital and Bill McIntyre, when called upon, said that he did not come to give a speech but to lend respectability to the delegation. At any rate, when the vote was taken at the time of the county elections, the reply was almost unanimously "No". I called a meeting of the temporary directors, Judge Ermatinger and Judge Colter, told them that the hospital scheme was off and they seemed disappointed.

A short time afterwards however, Bert Doherty, who was not only the City Clerk but City Solicitor as well, came over to my office and suggested that St. Thomas build a hospital of its own. This brought me from a state of disappointment to one of hope and enthusiasm. Good old Bert! So in 1920, the hospital scheme was undertaken again. After the necessary legal questions were taken care of, I suggested at a Council meeting, that we ask the city for \$50,000. Pat Meehan suggested \$100,000. I said that we would like that amount, if the city would give us that much. So we asked for a bylaw to vote for \$100,000, to build the new hospital. The next day, two of the aldermen had a laugh on how Pat put it over Curtis. Pat thought the city might vote for \$50,000 but not for \$100,000.

The vote for the bylaw was set for a certain date. We put on an intensive campaign. Our forces were well organized. Nothing was said in public, until about four days before the voting. When the day came, we had cars at every polling station arranged very quietly. The bylaw was carried two to one.

It was decided to build the new hospital on the north side of the Amasa Wood. At that time, we did not know of a hospital architect, so Mr. Neil Darrach was engaged as architect and Charlie Raven and I made trips to other hospitals in Detroit, Toronto and London to gather ideas. Miss Lucille Armstrong was a great help to us in deciding on certain plans. The masonry contract was given to the Ponsford Construction Co., with the building to be fireproof and the floors and stairs all iron and cement. The estimated cost was \$200,000, so \$100,000 had to be raised by donations and other means. There were many generous donors to the building fund, and the women of the city were wonderful in raising money to further the project with teas, bazaars and other means. The Women's Hospital Aid was very active in this respect.

In 1923, the building of the new hospital was finally under way. Charlie Raven and I jointly turned the first sod. The name Memorial Hospital was chosen, to commemorate the brave soldiers who had fought and died in the First World War. Outside, in front, is the bronze statue of a soldier on a pedestal. As you enter the hall, at the far end, are beautiful stained glass memorial windows, depicting Sir Galahad and the Holy Grail. On a table before the windows, a Book of Remembrance, enclosed in a glass case, is inscribed with the names of those who were killed in battle or died of disease. The windows and the Book of Remembrance were given by the Women's Hospital Aid.

When the St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital was built in 1954, in another part of town, the Memorial Hospital was converted into a chronic unit of the new hospital. It had served for about 30 years as a general hospital.

About 1923, a military officer called at my office and asked if I would accept the position of medical officer for the local returned men. I told him that there were other doctors who had seen longer service than I and named Dr. Alex Turner as one. The man replied that his orders were that I was the doctor to be appointed, so I accepted. My duties were to care for all returned men whose disability was due to war service. Since I was given a good monthly salary, I cared for the returned men regardless of the cause of their disabilities. I was also required to accompany the patient to London for a review of his case or to apply for a pension. When the war was over, the soldiers were so anxious to return home that they did not mention any disability due to the war, on their departure. As a result, we were able to get pensions for many of them. I continued in this position for about ten years, when on reaching the age limit, I retired.

When the war was over, the returned soldiers formed an organization called the Great War Veterans' Association. For some reason, after many bitter arguments, the organization broke up. In 1926, a new group was formed called the Canadian Legion. One day in October, a deputation called at my office and announced that they were forming a branch of the Canadian Legion in St. Thomas and asked me to be their first president. I told them that if they thought that I could be of use, I would be proud to accept the position, if elected. The election of officers was held and I was elected president and twelve other men were appointed on the executive. These were Harold Becker, Walter Barrett, Sid Chamberlain, Ian Cameron, Bert Ellis, Doug Gerrard, George Haines, Cal Palmer, A. K. Mair, Gordon Richardson, Ray Roulston and Charlie Watling. All meetings were conducted in strict order. No member could speak twice during a discussion without the permission of the president or chair. The members of the executive were a very fine lot of men. It was not long before the branch contained almost all the returned men of St. Thomas. They became very popular and were said to be one of the best branches of the Canadian Legion in Canada. They did a great service for the returned men of St. Thomas and district. I was president for four years, when I resigned to be followed by others, who very capably filled the office.

The St. Thomas and Elgin County Medical Association had been founded on April 8, 1899. I was one of the charter members and had served as president of the organization in 1905 and 1941 and 1942. On April 6, 1949, when the Association had been 50 years in existence, a banquet was held at the Grand Central Hotel. As I was the only survivor of the original charter members, I was the guest of honour at this gathering. The members presented me with an honorary life membership and an illuminated scroll which had been prepared by my daughter, Carolyn. Later, I had the honour of being made a life member of the Ontario Medical Association. This was in May of the same year.

Another organization in which I had been active was the St. Thomas Golf and Country Club, having been a member since it was first started at the east end of Talbot Street to the present. I served as president in the years 19 and 19 . The St. Thomas Chamber of Commerce was another organization to which I belonged, serving as president in 1925.