

WAS SIR SAM ABSENT WHEN CONTRACT WAS SIGNED?

Left Ottawa For England on June 3rd But is Thought to Have Completed Contract Before Going--Guarantee of New York Trust Company Was Given Nearly a Month After Contract Was Executed.

Ottawa, April 6.—Another thickening of the plot in regard to the fuse contract with Honorary Col. J. Wesley Allison's associates was developed by a question which Hon. Dr. Pugsley put to the Government at the opening of the Commons today. He wanted to know if there was an explanation to be given for an obvious discrepancy in dates respecting the departure of Major General Sir Sam Hughes for England last June and the signing by him of the ratification of the fuse contracts. In answer given in the House by the acting Minister of Militia, Hon. A. E. Kemp, yesterday, it was stated that General Sir Sam had left for England on June 3, 1915, and had returned on September 3 and that Hon. Senator Loughheed had been acting minister during the interval.

Dr. Pugsley noted that the fuse contract ratification, duly signed by Major General Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence, on behalf of his Britannic Majesty's government, was dated at Ottawa June 19, 1915. Dr. Pugsley wanted to know what the explanation was. Hon. A. E. Kemp said he did not know, but would try to look it up. There the matter rested so far as the House was concerned today.

Was It Ratified in Advance?

It is obvious that if Sir Sam sailed for England on June 3 last year, as stated to the House yesterday, he could not personally have "signed, sealed and delivered" on June 19, in Ottawa, in the presence of the witness, John F. Orde, K. C., the document ratifying the agreements between the shell committee and the American Ammunition Co. and the International Arms & Fuse Company. It looks as though General Hughes, in his anxiety to have the contracts go through, had ratified the contract before the agreement was actually executed, and had left it behind him duly signed and witnessed before he left for England on June 3rd. Either that, or else someone signed it

for him. Senator Loughheed was acting minister at the time, but it is safe to say that the latter will not be anxious to take the responsibility off the shoulders of the Minister of Militia.

In connection with dates, it may be noted, too, that the American Ammunition Co. was only incorporated with a cash capital of \$3,000 on May 25, 1915, and if General Hughes ratified in advance a contract promised to them he must have done it before he left for England on June 3, or within nine days after the company was formed. Evidently there was some license taken with the dates on the official documents and evidently too there was a plentiful hurry to rush the thing through on the part of the Minister of Militia. Possibly J. Wesley Allison was pressing the Minister to leave everything fixed up before he left for England and before Senator Loughheed came on the job.

Without Guaranty for Month.

Another peculiar circumstance in connection with the whole transaction will undoubtedly be pointed out in the House when the subject next comes up for discussion. The guaranty for the repayment of the million dollars in cash in case of default of contract which was to be advanced "immediately" on the signing of the contract was given by the Guaranty Trust Co. of New York on July 8, and the legal opinion supplied by J. F. Orde, K. C., as to this guaranty was given to the Shell Committee on July 13. In other words, nearly a month elapsed after the contract had been entered into before the Shell Committee knew that the guaranty was all right. Meanwhile under the terms of the contract the money was to have been advanced immediately, and presumably it was advanced.

There is another phase of the story which is also interesting to note. As noted above, Senator Loughheed was acting Minister of Militia for three months of last summer, from June 3

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to September 3, while Sir Sam Hughes was in England, and while this contract was entered into. When Sir Sam Hughes went to England in October of 1914, Hon. J. D. Hazen was the acting minister for a month. During Sir Sam's present absence Hon. A. E. Kemp has been acting minister. On other absences of Sir Sam from the capital during the time the Shell Committee was in operation, Sir Robert Borden himself was acting minister. Furthermore, Hon. Dr. Reid, Minister of Customs, had something to do with the department when he ordered the customs officials at Morrisburg to allow free entry for goods consigned to J. Wesley Allison.

Five Ministers Involved.

There are at least five ministers who might reasonably be supposed to know something of what was going on in the Militia Department in addition to Major General Sir Sam Hughes himself. It might be reasonable to sup-

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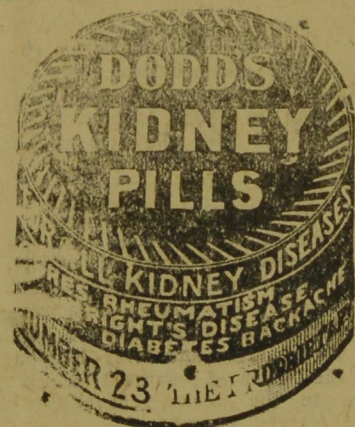
pose too that they knew how closely J. Wesley Allison was connected with the department and with orders for war munitions. But now the members of the cabinet are taking refuge behind the fact that they did not know what was going on. Apart altogether from the fundamental constitutional doctrine of collective ministerial responsibility, the facts themselves point with reasonable certainty to direct knowledge of the inside workings of the Militia Department.

NEW YORK SEXTON HANGED HIMSELF

New York, April 6.—Under the belfry of old St. Paul's Church, the sexton hanged himself today. Philip G. Walter, tiring, as he has recently complained, of the monotony of his position, after thirty-one years of service at the famous edifice at Broadway and Vesey street, climbed upon a piano stool which he placed upon a table, fastened a sash around his neck, tied the end of this cord to the head of the stairs which lead to the belfry, and kicked the stool from under him.

Discovery of the sexton's act was made by an assistant, who in a room below had found a pad on which Walter had written instructions for the finder to climb to the room beneath the belfry.

Walter was 55 years old.



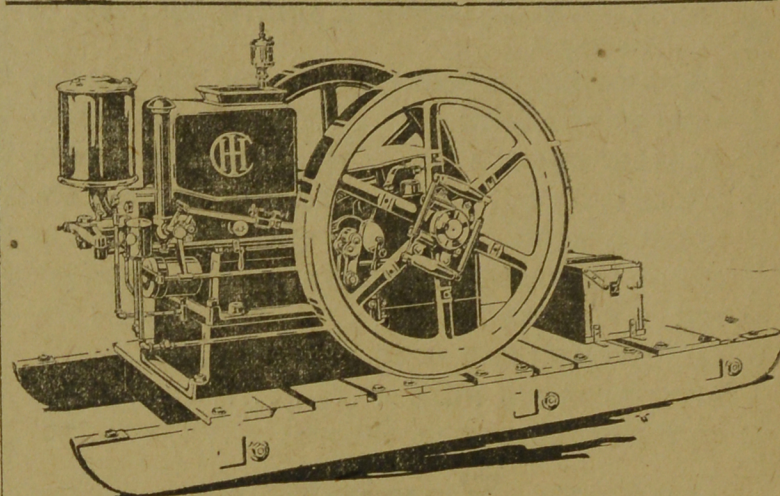
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