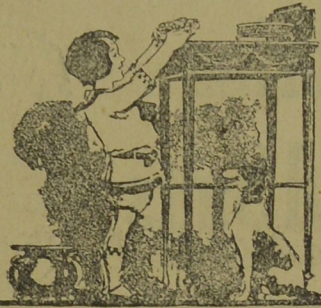




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Astonishing Evidence Regarding Middlemen's Profits

Ottawa, April 6.—How Charles E. Slater, middleman, made \$15,235 out of the government contract to the Gauthier Company for eight thousand pairs of military boots, was illustrated in three illuminating passages at the parliamentary investigation yesterday.

George Long, secretary-treasurer and director of the Gauthier Company, was on the stand.

"Didn't it occur to you that you could have sold direct to the government without the middleman's rake-off?" asked Mr. E. M. Macdonald.

The manufacturer shrugged his shoulders. It was "an old contract" Slater made with the company to

secure them government business. It was made in 1913.

"Did you try to stop it?" persisted Mr. Macdonald.

"I didn't want anything to do with him at all," declared the witness with a wave of the hand.

"Why didn't you personally ask for the contract?"

"We couldn't do it."

"Do you intend to pay Slater any more for future contracts?"

"Never," said the manufacturer emphatically. "I will battle this affair. We will treat direct with the government in future. I have the power now."

Such was the manufacturer's view.

point. Next came the middleman's office. Charles E. Slater had put in the Gauthier tender half an hour before the time closed at a figure just capable by two and a half cents of landing the plum.

He had also advised the Gauthier Company to purchase leather for army boots before tenders were even called for.

DIRECTOR TESTIFIES.

H. W. Brown, director of contracts, also gave evidence.

"How did Slater get his 'premonition'?" enquired Mr. Macdonald, sarcastically.

The official hesitated. Mr. Macdonald helped him out.

"Did you have a patronage list?" he asked.

"Well, the list was supplied from the minister's office," admitted the official.

"You had a list not only for boots, but for all other militia supplies?"

"Yes, we had a list from the minister's office."

"And you could not add to it, nor take away from it?"

"Not unless at my own risk."

"And this patronage list included the name of Mr. Charles E. Slater, who was not a manufacturer at all?"

"Yes."

"He was simply a middleman."

"Well, I knew he was formerly associated with the Slater Shoe Company, but I did not know at the time whether he was still at the business or not."

"Then the responsibility for sending tendering forms to Charles E. Slater does not rest with you," commented Mr. McCurdy, "but with the men who prepared the list—the minister's office?"

"I had no power to go beyond that," replied the official.

"You have a patronage list in your department?" asked Mr. Macdonald again.

"Well, yes."

REVISED BY NEW MINISTER.

"And it was revised by the new minister?"

"Yes."

"And unless a man's name was on this list you didn't ask him to tender?"

"No."

"And Charles E. Slater's name was on that list?"

"Yes."

Witness stated that latterly the department had not asked for tenders on boots. At first this had been the course followed but for seven years all boots had been secured from the Slater Company. At that time Mr. Charles E. Slater was identified with the company and had negotiated the contracts.

"He seems to have a grip somewhere," commented Chairman Middlebro.

"I don't think he had any undue influence," replied Mr. Brown. "He kept after the business."

"But he got that contract in 1913 for the Gauthier Company half an hour before the tenders closed?" persisted Mr. Middlebro.

"We have been up against that kind of thing for several years," said the witness.

"What do you say about Gauthier getting busy and buying leather before the tenders had even been called for?"

"That was news to me."

"But there is no question about the fact that a requisition for eight thousand pairs was made before tenders were even called for?"

"I can swear most positively," replied the official, "that neither from myself nor from any of the officials in my department did the company or Mr. Slater get any advance information."

"It has been shown here," put in Mr. McCurdy, "that the iniquitous contract between Slater and the company was made before tenders were called for by the government."

"I don't know about that," responded the witness.

He added that Slater's name was only put on the patronage list a short time before the 1913 contract was called for.

"We better find out why Slater's name was placed on that list and how," commented Mr. Macdonald.

"Who gave you this list of middlemen through whom boots were to be purchased in Winnipeg?" Mr. Macdonald proceeded.

"I didn't get the list. I had nothing to do with that business from start to finish," protested Mr. Brown. "I only learned of it later on."

"Then the boots were not purchased through you as director of contracts?"

"No, sir; no, indeed."

DISAGREED WITH OTHERS.

Mr. S. R. Wickett of Toronto, who has been chief advisor to the Militia Department on boots since January 13, when he was appointed by General Hughes, gave evidence last evening. He said he disagreed with the boot recommended on January 21 by the special committee of manufacturers. The uppers were not suitable and the leather was not properly dressed. It was black leather and should be tan to go with the khaki uniform. The price, \$1.65, was too high, the same boot ought to be obtained by the department for \$1.

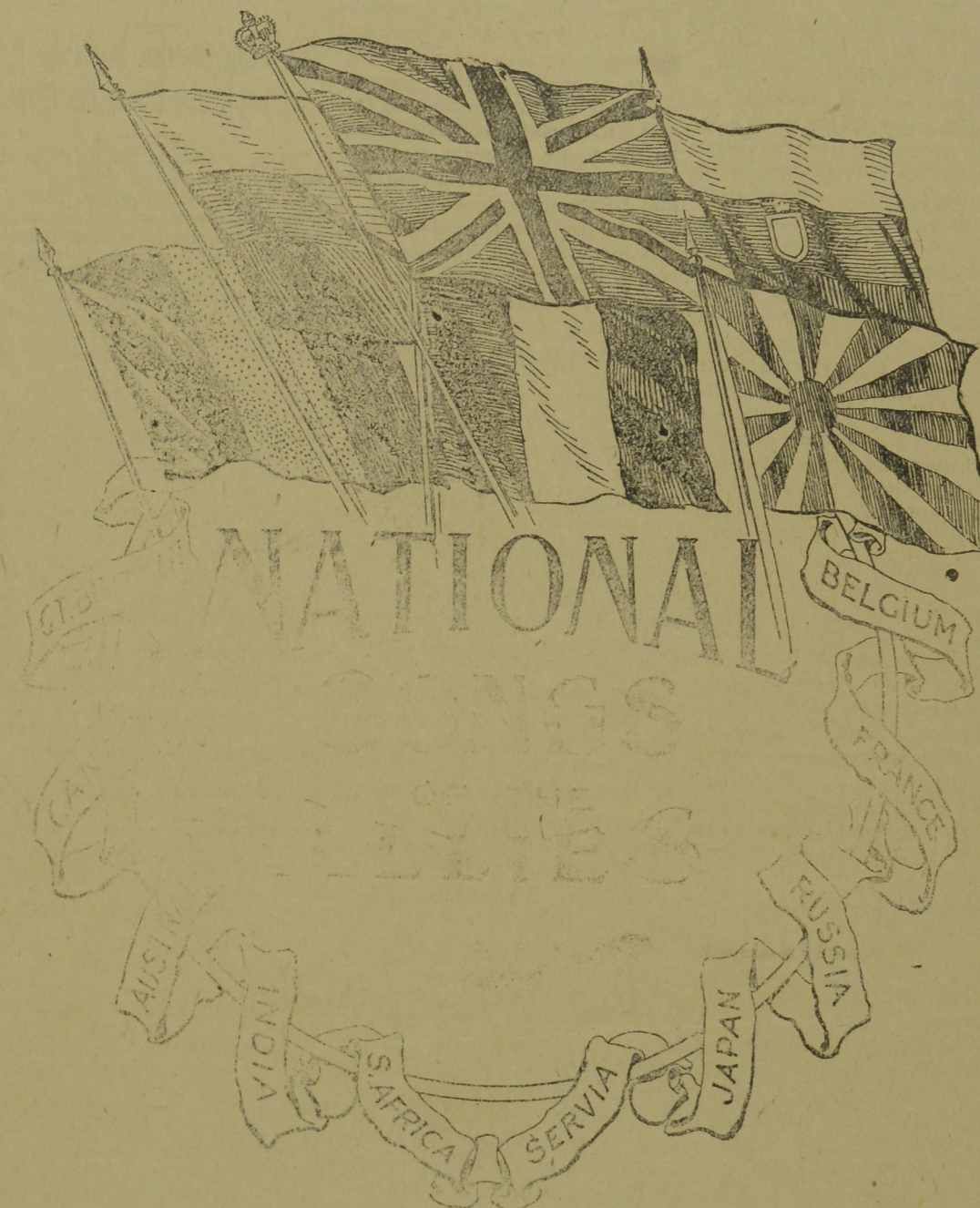
Mr. Wickett recommended two boots for the Canadian soldiers, one for winter use and the other for summer. He secured samples of the heavier boot and the closest to which he wanted came from the Ames-McCready firm. It was a standard-

(Continued on page six.)

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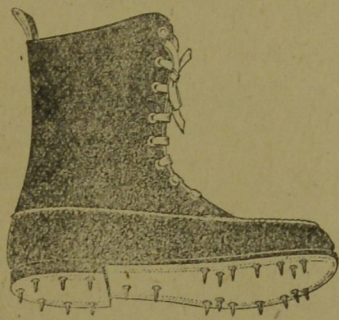
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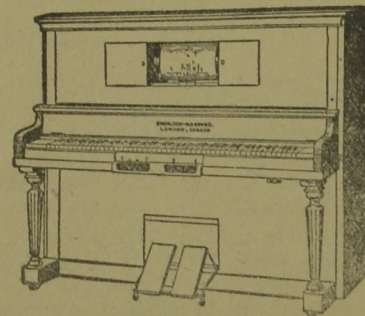
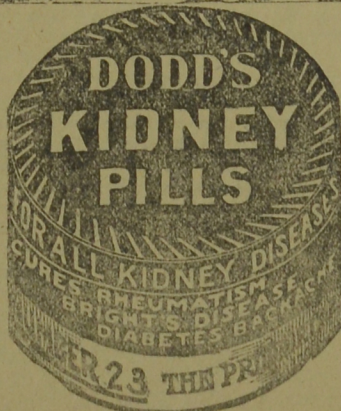
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