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GERMAN POSITION ON THE YSER UNDER A TERRIFIC BOMBARDMENT; THE ALLIED FLEETS SHELLING THE TURKISH FORTS

TORY MIDDLEMEN MADE BIG PROFITS

Great Patriots Who Bled the Country on War Contracts---In One Instance a Profit of 1200 Per Cent Was Gathered in--Sister of the Deputy Speaker Supplied Drugs to the Troops at Valcartier--Auditor General Powerless to Stop Fight

Ottawa, April 9--The connection between the patronage list, under the present government, and the prices paid for \$23,000 worth of drugs supplied to the camp at Valcartier by Mme. Plamondon, a sister of Albert Seigny, M.P., deputy speaker of the house of commons, was worked out in the public accounts committee for the benefit of the taxpayers who have to pay for the enhanced prices due to the "war taxes."

The evidence showed that the profits which Mme. Plamondon made varied on the items examined by the hundred per cent. to no less than two hundred per cent. Not only were retail prices charged in most cases, although the order was for so large an amount, but prices considerably higher than the usual retail prices were collected from the government. The bills were all paid by the militia department, and in this connection it is significant to note that Mr. Seigny himself wrote to the paymaster of the militia department, J. W. Borden on Aug. 30, asking him if he would "please be good enough to pay this account as soon as possible." Paymaster Borden sent instructions to the proper officer to "please hasten the preparation of this account for payment."

AUDITOR-GENERAL HELPLESS

The auditor-general who has been taking notes all through the sittings of the committee, took the stand for a few minutes, at the conclusion of the exorbitant prices paid for military drugs. The committee wanted to know from him how it was that the accounts could be audited when such glaring overcharges appeared in them.

Mr. Fraser explained that all war expenditures in the militia department already were paid before the accounts came to him for auditing. "What's the use of locking the door after the money has been stolen?" asked Mr. Nickle.

"All I can do is to bring things to light as well as I can," replied Mr. Fraser. "That's what I am doing."

The auditor-general noted that it had always been the custom in the militia department to pay the accounts before they were sent to the auditor-general's office for auditing. That was the case with most of the departments and had been the rule for years. If the government would increase his staff large enough it might be possible to audit the accounts before payment was made. He was merely carrying out the audit act as passed by parliaments.

Mr. Smythe of Algoma, pointed out that the losses which had been shown to the government in the contracts investigated by the committee might go towards the payment of salaries of the men which Mr. Fraser wanted.

THE PATRONAGE LIST

How the patronage list is made up was told to the committee by H. W. Brown, director of contracts of the militia department. Mr. Brown said that all purchasers for the department were made after reference to the patronage list, which was sent to local headquarters. Prior to 1911 he said this list had not been very extensive. All the names that had been on it then had been replaced, and there were now 8,000 names on the list.

"You had practically no list prior to 1911?" asked Mr. Kyte. "Well, practically none," replied Mr. Brown.

EXORBITANT CHARGES

Then Henry Watters, an Ottawa druggist took the stand to tell the committee something about the prices which Mme. Plamondon, who keeps a small drug store in Quebec, and who has the patronage for Camp charged for the \$23,000 worth of supplies she sold to the department last autumn. Original invoices were not available for the committee and Mr. Watters declared at the outset that the documents in the case for the committee showed no evidence of having been checked over. He noted that there had been a variation in the prices charged for certain standard articles which were supposed to have been bought at fixed prices. For instance, blue ointment had been bought at \$1.20 per pound and at 65 cents per pound. "Sixty-five cents per pound," said Mr. Watters, "would be a reasonable price, but \$1.20 per pound would be very high."

An invoice showed that Mme. Plamondon had charged \$15 per thousand for aspirin tablets. As a retail price, witness, though this was too high even after allowing for increased war prices.

In another instance, aspirin tablets had been charged at \$12.35. Mr. Watters thought that the department ought to have got them for nine dollars per thousand. "I supplied them at less than that in September," said the witness.

Sixty pounds of oil of wintergreen had been purchased at prices varying from \$3.20 to \$5.50 per pound, the total invoice being \$297.50. Mr. Watters thought that the price charged should have been at the lowest, \$3.20, and that there had been an overcharge on this purchase of at least \$105.50.

"The goods were bought from officials appointed by the government," retorted Dr. Reid. "Every one of them appointed under the late government."

"But they worked from patronage lists prepared by your minister," retorted Mr. Kyte.

"Let's cut out the politics," suggested Chairman Morphy.

200 PER CENT PROFIT

Continuing at the afternoon's session, the analysis of profits ranging from one hundred per cent upon dainties items supplied by Mme. Plamondon, Mr. Watters instanced the case of zinc ointment. One of the invoices charged \$1.50 per pound and another 45 cents per pound. Twenty pounds were supplied at \$1.50 which, according to Mr. Watters, would realize a profit of about two hundred per cent.

The next item was fluid extract of gentian, for which \$2.75 per pound was charged. A druggist ought to be able to buy it at \$1.31. That meant a profit of about one hundred per cent to Mme. Plamondon. For tincture of ginger the price charged by Mme. Plamondon was \$6.50. According to wholesale prices it would cost her \$3.27. That meant a profit of about one hundred per cent.

On cathartic pills for which Mme. Plamondon charged \$3.50 per thousand (Continued on page four)

Rome, April 10--It is announced that Prince Von Buelow has withdrawn from the neutrality negotiations with Italy. The situation is more strained than ever. The Austrians are rushing troops from the Serbian front to the Italian frontier.

Paris, April 10--The official statement says the Germans continue a tremendous effort to gain a foothold on the Yser, but have been unsuccessful. The British bombardment is terrific and was combined with attacks by airmen on the Krucke and Lasoute on Thursday night.

ATTACKING THE DARDANELLES

(SPECIAL CABLE TO THE MAIL.)

London, April 10--It was announced this morning that the Allied fleet is again attacking the Turkish forts at the Dardanelles on the European side and a land force is aiming to attack Adrianople the only fortified place in European Turkey.

TERRIFIC FIGHTING REPORTED

Paris, April 10--Was reported that there has been terrific fighting on the Combres Heights east of Eparges with a fearful loss of life on both sides. The French are pressing the advantage gained and the Germans are launching offensives in the Champagne district and near the seacoast to offset the pressure. A general battle along the entire front expected to take place on Monday.

WILL BUY THE CARGO

(SPECIAL CABLE TO THE MAIL.)

London, April 10--It is announced that the Government of Great Britain has decided to purchase the cargo of the American steamer Wilhelmina, which was seized some time ago, with her cargo of foodstuffs intended for German consumption.

JOFFRE'S BIG ARMY

(SPECIAL CABLE TO THE MAIL.)

Paris, April 10--The French army operating at Eparges at Miheul front is the largest yet concentrated at any given point and is under the personal direction of Joffre. Further successes confidently expected.

FRENCH BARK TORPEDOED

London, April 10--It is officially announced that the French Barque Chateau-birand has been torpedoed and sunk by the Germans. The crew has been landed safe in France.

RUSSIANS MAKING PROGRESS

Petrograd, April 10--General Sukhomlinoff the war minister says that the Austrians have retreated eighteen miles along the Carpathian front. The Russian offensive is on the southern slopes of the range. The outlook is very hopeful for a sweeping Russian victory.