

# THE Charlottetown Guardian

President ..... A. A. Bartlett  
Managing Editor ..... J. R. Burnett

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## "LIFTING THE VEIL"

The big guns of the Liberal opposition, Messrs Pugsley and Carvell, have been spiked. They attacked the work of the Shell Committee, a body responsible to the Imperial Government, and made certain allegations of partiality and excessive payments in the distribution of, and payment for, shell contracts. In reply, the Solicitor-General, the Minister of Marine and the Minister of Militia and Defence have proved conclusively that there is not a shadow of foundation for any charge of irregularity, and that the whole case of these Opposition leaders was based on clippings from sundry Liberal newspapers, and these not of the front rank. The Toronto Globe and the Ottawa Free Press, the two principal Liberal newspapers, dissociated themselves from these attacks, and the latter distinctly repudiated Mr Pugsley as spokesman for the responsible rank and file of the party. Mr Pugsley insinuated that Mr D. A. Thomas, Mr Lloyd George's representative to Canada in connection with the shell contracts, had declared that "if he could raise the veil just a little" he might be able to show that "there was a great deal of politics in Canada in connection with the Shell Committee." The Solicitor-General immediately challenged this statement, and asked Mr Pugsley to produce it. Mr Pugsley was unable to do so at the time, but next day he said that Mr Thomas in the course of a speech at Montreal used the words, "If I raise the veil a little."

This was the sole basis on which Mr Pugsley built his charge of political partizanship, little enough in all conscience even if Mr Thomas had implied that fault-finding had anything to do with his remarks. But far from that being the case, the speech from which Mr Pugsley took these words was devoted to commendation of the Shell Committee on the excellence of their work. That there may be no mistake on this point we quote the paragraph from Mr Thomas's speech in full:

"If I raise the veil a little," said Mr Thomas, "it will be on my own personal responsibility, and do not take it as coming from the Minister of Munitions. But, naturally, from my official position, I must have considerable inside knowledge of what is going on in Canada in the manufacture of munitions. With regard to munitions I am in a position to tell you the Government (the Imperial Government) desires to place further orders for the smaller shells and also desires to place orders for larger shells, provided prices and conditions are satisfactory. The British Government was anxious to give Canada every preference, but had to consider three conditions: efficiency of ammunition, expedition in manufacture, and economy. As to delivery, Canadian manufacturers up to last June had been far behind, but had made great improvement since then, but even yet they were not always up to time."

A condition of affairs which Mr Pugsley would doubtless attribute to the Canadian Government, and in respect of which he would entirely absolve the manufacturers.

"As to efficiency of the shells, those which had passed inspection had turned out well." In this connection Mr Thomas paid a warm tribute to the Shell Committee—here is the veil lifted, and this is the verdict: "A warm tribute to the Shell Committee, and particularly General Bertram [the maligned of Mr Pugsley] who," he declared, "had placed the whole Empire in his debt for the manner in which he had devoted himself to the work. The Committee had been criticised because manufacturers of shells sat on it but," he pointed out, "if these were cut off it would be impossible to get experts on it at all."

The very feature of the Shell Committee which Mr Pugsley denounced as corrupt and scandalous is the feature commended by the British representative, Mr Thomas:

"The Shell Committee is now about a year old," said Mr Thomas, "and I think the time has come when its work might well be revised. At my suggestion Sir Frederick Donaldson, perhaps the most distinguished expert on munitions in the Empire, is coming to Canada. He was chief superintendent of ordnance at Woolwich, but resigned to become Lloyd George's adviser. He will be here in a few days, and, I think, will be able to render a good deal of assistance in the manufacture of shells, and also in the manufacture of big guns."

Then, further, the report says:

"With regard to economy," continued Mr Thomas, "that must be considered, and I may tell you the cost of shells in Canada has been higher than in competitive countries. It is complained that fat orders have gone to the United States, but I can assure you a big slice will be reserved to Canada as long as the price is fairly satisfactory. But prices so far have been higher here than in the United States or Great Britain, where any extra profits have been commandeered by the Government."

As a sample of the patriotic impulses of Canadian manufacturers, Mr Thomas stated that recently Messrs Baillie & Wood, of Hamilton, had undertaken to manufacture a million 18-pounder cartridge shells at absolute cost. In the same spirit Hon. Frank

continental railway shops at the disposal of the Imperial Government for the manufacture of munitions. "They have done that," he said, "without provision for profit to any one, and I thank the Canadian Government for the splendid spirit they have shown."

Mr Thomas himself took the responsibility of raising the veil a little, and having raised the veil, in that speech he exposed to the people of Canada what was behind it—nothing but commendation for the unalloyed patriotism and businesslike enthusiasm with which they had thrown themselves into the work of getting Canadians to become manufacturers of ammunition for the Allies.

Mr Pugsley further quoted from the Liberal Monthly to show that whereas Canadian manufacturers charged \$5.70 for the manufacture of shells, Australia charged only \$5.05. But he did not mention that Australia had entered into a year's contract, whereas Canadian manufacturers had to depend upon monthly orders. Nor did he mention that while in the first instance the price charged by Canada was \$5.70, it had since gone down to \$4.00, and so on until it reached \$1.75, making the average price for the year considerably lower than that of Australia.

Thus is the bottom knocked out of the whole of the Opposition's contemptible case, against the Government.

## THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Rumour is already busy on the streets with the expected departure of the Prince Edward Island for Georgetown and, as usual, the rumour has been crystallized into a prophecy that she is going to take her departure from here on that conveniently indefinite date, "Next week." Needless to say, the rumour and the prophecy are both unfounded. The work of the Prince Edward Island is to make connections between the Intercolonial and the Prince Edward Island railways at the most convenient points. These points at present are Pictou and Charlottetown and, so far, connections have been made without a break. Passengers and mails from the Island connect with the Maritime Express via Pictou, and those for the Island connect at Charlottetown with the trains east and west and, both on the mainland and here, are sped on their way with summertime regularity. The service to date has been exceptionally regular, and that in the face of ice conditions which with any other steamer hitherto tried in these waters would have been impossible. What the immediate future has in store it is useless to prophesy, but as long as Captain Murchison is able to make the connections he is making at present he may be depended upon to make them and all talk about his leaving for Georgetown is silly, if not malicious. When he goes to Georgetown, as in all probability he may be compelled to do before winter is over, it will be because it is the only way in which he can make connections. It is even possible that, in the event of a snowstorm or thick weather, he may be obliged to go to Georgetown for a day, without permanently abandoning the Charlottetown route. In any case he will be the best judge of the conditions to be faced and he may safely be trusted with taking the course which will best suit the public service and the safety of his valuable ship.

The Prince Edward Island has proved herself a magnificent ice breaker and we are informed by men who crossed the strait by her that she has ploughed her way through ice rafted to a depth of over twenty feet. Her captain and officers are proud of her and while they are discretely silent as to the future it is evident that their faith in the ship is such that the abandonment of Charlottetown harbour, should it become necessary, would be a disappointment if not a surprise to them. Notwithstanding what she has already done and the buoyant hopes of her officers, however, winter is winter in these latitudes and it is too much to hope that she will be able to maintain an uninterrupted service between Pictou and Charlottetown through the trying months of February and March. But we shall see what we shall see and if she does it, great will be the Prince Edward Island. In the meantime she has done what no other steamer in Maritime waters could have done, and she has not yet met anything to make her flinch.

## THEY NEED WATCHING

By some of the papers seized on Captain von Papen it is shown that the ramifications of the German conspiracy in which he was involved stretched into Canada, says an exchange. The German plotter had paid agents in this country, and it may be assumed with safety that the names disclosed were but a small part of the list.

Canada is warned by this revelation to be on her guard. It is idle to hope that the intricate system of secret conspiracy which the Germans have built up in the United States, has not an important department working in this country as well, and it is bad policy to wait for some shocking event to awaken the people to a realization of dangerous conditions.

To Germany, when the country is at war, the whole world is the theatre for action. The Huns have built up an organization in the United States that is the equivalent of an army corps operating in that country. In China, their hand is seen almost daily. In Mexico they are at work, as well as in South America. Obviously to assume that the fertile ground of Canada is being overlooked by these industrious sowers is to live in a fool's paradise.

Secret service agents of the Government, as well as those employed in self-defence by the large munition-making firms are making it very hot for German plotters in the United States. Are any of these dangerous characters being smuggled over the long boundary line into Canada? They might consider themselves safer in this country than in the United States, where events have compelled close official

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