

PURCHASE OF REVOLVERS AND PISTOLS

Militia Department paid \$18.50, or \$4.00 higher than same arm is sold regularly to retail merchants in Canada, and \$4.50 higher than was paid by New York State Government.

WHY THIS EXHORBITANT PRICE? WHY WAS THERE A MIDDLEMAN? WHY SUCH CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS MADE UNDER OATH?

ON Jan. 3rd Mr. John Fraser, I.S.O., Auditor-General for the Dominion of Canada, brought to the attention of the Davidson Commission the matter of the purchase of revolvers and pistols by the Department of Militia. He stated that his information was that the identical Colts Automatic pistol which the Colts Patent Fire Arms Company, Hartford, Conn., were selling to the Canadian Government at \$18.50, were sold to the New York State Government for about \$14.00.

The Auditor-General also stated that to the trade in Canada the price of these pistols was \$18.50 less a trade discount of 10%, 5% and 2½% for cash.

On January 5th, the Davidson Commission subpoenaed two retail merchants from the City of Ottawa, Mr. T. M. Birkett and Mr. Geo. Easdale, manager of the Ketchum Co., and each corroborated what the Auditor-General had stated, that they had paid for this identical pistol from the Colts Patent Fire Arms Company, \$18.50 less 10%, 5% and 2½% trade discount.

Purchases made through J. Wesley Allison.

Mr. H. W. Brown, the Director of Contracts for the Department of Militia and Defence, before the Davidson Commission, Jan. 5th, 1916, stated in reply to Mr. John Thompson, K.C., Counsel for the Commission as follows:—

Q.—What orders were given for automatic pistols?

A.—The first order is one for 1,000 automatic pistols given on the 5th of September to Colonel J. W. Allison, by authority of an Order-in-Council of that date. I have the Order-in-Council here before me.

Sir Charles Davidson:—You might read that.

The Witness:—The Order-in-Council is as follows:—

“The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report, dated 5th September, 1914, from the Minister of Militia and Defence, recommending that he be given authority to purchase for the Canadian military forces, 1,000 Automatic Pistols, 45 calibre, at a price not exceeding \$18.50 each; and 10,000 rounds of ammunition therefor, at a price not exceeding \$40.00 per 1,000 rounds.

“The Committee advise that the requisite authority be granted accordingly.

“(Sgd.) Rodolphe Boudreau,
“Clerk of the Privy Council.”

“In accordance with that Order-in-Council, and in accordance with verbal instructions which I got from the Deputy Minister of Militia, I wrote Colonel J. Wesley Allison, Morrisburg, Ont., the same day, namely, the 5th of September, as follows:—

“Ottawa, Sept. 5th, 1914.

“Sir,—

“I am directed to request you to be good enough to procure and supply to this Department, at as early a date as possible, 1,000 Automatic Pistols, 45 calibre, at a price not exceeding \$18.50 each; and 10,000 rounds of ammunition therefor, at a price not exceeding \$40.00 per 1,000 rounds; subject to any instructions, verbal or otherwise, which you may have already received. Shipping instructions will be furnished later on. The invoice, in triplicate, should be sent to the undersigned.

(Sgd.) H. W. BROWN,
“Director of Contracts.

“This was signed by me and the same day it was handed to Colonel Allison, I think the same day as the recommendation to Council and the Order-in-Council.”

Thus we find that the Minister of Militia gave directions that these pistols should not be ordered direct from the manufacturers but that the order be given to Col. J. Wesley Allison of Morrisburg. There is a strong suspicion that there was a reason for this and the following extracts from the evidence taken before Sir Charles Davidson in regard to this point may be of interest:

Allison Says that Neither Directly or Indirectly Did He Receive Any Commission.

Before the Davidson Commission on Monday January 3rd, 1916, Mr. Allison being duly sworn was examined by Mr. John Thompson, K.C., Counsel for the Davidson Commission, as follows:—

Q.—Did you sell any revolvers to the Canadian Government? **A.—**No, sir.

Q.—Or pistols? **A.—**No, sir.

Q.—Were you the agent of any person who sold revolvers or pistols to the Canadian Government? **A.—**No.

Q.—Or are you the agent of any Company who sold any revolvers or pistols to the Canadian Government? **A.—**No.

Q.—Did you profit by way of commission on any revolvers or pistols that were sold to the Canadian Government or to the Department of Militia and Defence? **A.—**No, sir.

Q.—Not in any way? **A.—**No.