

## THE ABANDONMENT IN ENGLAND OF CANADIAN EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED TO THE CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

FOR considerable time past statements have been made that much of the equipment being supplied our Canadian Expeditionary Forces was being discarded in England and other supplies of standard make were given to the Canadian soldiers just before leaving for France.

Speaking in the House of Commons on January 22nd, 1917, Sir Robert Borden stated:—

"It is important for an army at the front to have a uniform standard of equipment, transport, and everything else. . . . I believe that some equipment supplied was left when the First Canadian Contingent departed for France. . . . I discussed the matter with General Carson when I was in England last year. He told me that the equipment was left because it was not of the same type as the British equipment and they did not desire to have two types. . . . It is most desirable, if the troops from Canada and from the rest of the Empire are to fight side by side, that all equipment and transport should be standardized, for it is obvious that otherwise operations cannot be carried on so effectively.

On January 30th, 1917, Sir Sam Hughes speaking on the destruction of Canadian equipment in England, stated:—

"Without actually quoting the right hon. gentleman (Sir Robert Borden), he said that wherever a committee of the British service examined goods and threw them out he was ready to abide by the decision of that committee.

"I am not finding the slightest fault with his taking that ground, but it is not the ground I take.

"My stand is that Canada should decide as to what she herself shall use.

Mr. Pugsley:—Before my hon. friend leaves that matter, could he say what was the value of the equipment which was thrown away?

Sir Sam Hughes:—I forget; it was millions. We did not look at the value; we were so busy swearing we had no time to figure up the value."

If as Sir Sam states, millions of dollars worth of Canadian equipment has been discarded by the British authorities in England, there can be but one conclusion, namely, that the continued purchase of this unsuitable material was due to the foolishness and extravagance of some person or persons. Perhaps a little less Hughesism, Allisonism, graftism and patronageism would have saved the country the millions which Sir Sam says has been thrown away. The fact is notorious that great quantities of Canadian supplies, Ross rifles, Oliver equipment, McAdam spades and motor trucks, etc., were abandoned in England and replaced by Imperial equipment all of which will subsequently have to be paid for by the Canadian people.

### The Ross Rifle.

Volumes could be written in regard to this weapon, but it is now discarded much to the satisfaction of any soldier who was compelled to use it. The second battle of Ypres proved conclusively that it was an unserviceable arm.

### Oliver Equipment.

This equipment consists of a leather belt, with a series of straps, buckles, hooks and knapsack

designed to carry the soldier's outfit. Its defects are universally recognized. It is much heavier than the Imperial "Webb" equipment, which is the standard equipment of the British army. The cartridge pouches of the Oliver "Canadian" equipment are bulky and badly placed and interfere with the comfort of the soldier when he lies down. It is poorly balanced and the shoulder pack pulls up the straps in front so that they press on the abdomen and interfere with the soldier's breathing.

From the best authority it is stated that three commissions were appointed to examine and report on the relative merits of the "Oliver" and "Webb" equipment and that all three reported strongly in favor of the "Webb" equipment.

It is a notorious fact that the Oliver equipment which until late in the fall of 1916 was supplied to our Canadian soldiers costing thousands and thousands of dollars is absolutely unsuitable and it is doubted if a set has ever gone to France. On leaving English camps for the front the units or drafts are supplied with the "Webb" equipment the Oliver being turned into Ordnance Depots. The result has been that vast quantities have accumulated in England.

In one tent at Ashford can be found between 17,000 and 18,000 and others were being added. At Liphook can be found another 8,000, and at several other camps surplus stores of Oliver equipment are to be found.

About the 1st of December, 1916, 40,000 were returned to Canada. At the present moment it is believed that the supplying of the Oliver equipment has been discontinued, but Sir Sam Hughes' obstinacy in continuing to purchase the "Oliver" equipment long after its unsuitability was recognized and admitted, is without excuse and committed his department to still further extravagance and waste.

### Motor Transports and Armoured Cars.

At Burford there are to-day stored armoured cars and motor transports abandoned two years ago at Salisbury Plains. When the First Battalion was sent to England the Government's ambition to have it fully equipped in every detail cost the country some \$500,000 for motor transports and armoured cars. On arrival in England they were found unsuitable for active service and when the Division went to France the British War Office supplied new motor transports.

### The McAdam Spade.

Much has been stated about this shovel, patented by Sir Sam's private Secretary. Over \$33,000 spent, every dollar of which was absolutely wasted.

And that is not all. It is abundantly clear that great quantities of Canadian supplies have been discarded and the Government has continued to purchase and forward to England with the Overseas Forces articles after it was well-known that they were unsuitable. Why this was done yet remains to be seen.