

In the foregoing extracts from the speeches of Liberal members we have indicated plainly how specific and positive and how altogether grave and startling were the charges made. In spite of the fact that many Conservative speakers followed and talked about shells and the Shell Committee, no attempt was made to answer these specific charges. They have not been answered to this day.

Sir Sam Hughes Evades Charges.

Not even Sir Sam Hughes himself, who delivered a characteristic speech which has been advertised in Conservative papers as having "shattered the shell charges," answered these specific charges. The charges stand to-day as they stood when they were made, plain and specific and backed up by documentary evidence.

More About Prices.

While the facts disclosed in Parliament show that prices for machining shells had been successively reduced, they also show that first orders were placed with a number of firms at less than half the highest price. This would seem to discount, or at all events qualify the argument that higher prices were necessary on account of purchasing new machinery.

It will be obvious that the numerous small concerns started throughout the country to make shells must have received abnormally high prices to enable them to buy or lease their factory and purchase the equipment especially for the purpose, without having any other kindred business in sight.

Sir Sam Hughes replies that the prices were not higher than were paid in the United States or Great Britain. But his statement is in direct conflict with that of Mr. Thomas who said: "I may tell you the cost of shells in Canada has been higher than in competitive countries, the prices so far have been higher here than in the United States."

The prices may be no higher now seeing that they have been substantially reduced, but according to Mr. Thomas they were higher.

Even if it be true, as claimed by Sir Sam, that prices in Canada were or are no higher than in the United States or Great Britain, that is no answer at all, as it is well known that the Yankee trader has been holding out for the very last cent in the business, a course Canadian manufacturers should be too patriotic to follow. In England, too, as Mr. Thomas points out, any extra profits over the average profits of manufacturers before the War, are commandeered by the British Government.

What is the Attitude of the Government?

So far it has been held by the government speakers that the Shell Committee, although nominated by the Borden Government, is an Imperial body responsible only to the Imperial Government. Said the Hon. Mr. Meighen who was spokesman for the Government,—"I do not stand here as a sponsor of or as one responsible for the conduct of this Shell Com-

mittee. I am not here to attack the Shell Committee; I am not here to defend the Shell Committee; I am here to offer some remarks in regard to what they have done, in regard to their status and character, in regard to their responsibility, and in regard to our duty towards them. The members of the Shell Committee were named by the Government of Canada, and that was at the request of the Imperial authorities. It was done for the purpose of securing the manufacture of shells in this country for the Imperial authorities. The naming of them was done by this Government. They were constituted on being so named, and having been constituted they were placed at the disposal of the Imperial authorities and became a committee answerable to the Imperial authorities alone. Had they been in a position where we had authority over them, had they been constituted as a committee under a department of this Government; we would have had authority over them and we would have been responsible."

Continuing Mr. Meighen said,—"We divorced the Shell Committee from the Canadian Government in the matter of responsibility; we have made them a committee under Imperial authority. I am not here to say whether they did wrong throughout or whether they did right throughout; they are answerable to the Imperial authorities for what they did."

Mr. Kyte, Liberal M.P., effectively replied to this by quoting from a speech made in Parliament by Sir Robert Borden in April last as follows: (See Hansard, April 5th, 1915, Vol. 3, P. 2614.)

"I wish to place before Parliament the record of what has been accomplished by the committee appointed in this country to fill orders which the British Government desired to place here, if they could be placed in Canada, for the supply of munitions. A committee was formed by the Minister of Militia in the early stages of the War, consisting at that time of Col. A. Bertram, Chairman; Thos. Cantley, Esq.; Geo. W. Watts, Esq.; E. Carnegie, Esq., representing the manufacturers; Col. T. Hanson, Master General of Ordnance; Col. Greville Harston, Chief Inspector of Arms and Ammunition; and Lt.-Col. F. D. Lafferty, B.C.A., Superintendent of the Dominion Arsenal, representing the Department of Militia and Defence."

"The executive work of the committee has been very wisely entrusted to the Chairman, Colonel Bertram, who reports weekly to the Minister of Militia and also to the Committee when it meets (which is usually monthly) or more often, at the call of the Minister."

Here we see that the Minister of Militia was the supervisory authority, else why should reports be made to him or why should meetings of the Committee be at his call.