

### "Go to Col. J. Wesley Allison."

Mr. Harris added that at the close of this interview on May 6th, at which General Bertram was present, Col. Carnegie told him that "if he wanted a contract he would have to go to Col. J. Wesley Allison." This, however, Mr. Harris made up his mind not to do and he and Mr. Russell continued their efforts with the Shell Committee until finally told that the 5,000,000 order had been let to the United States concerns. Mr. Harris said he felt that the Shell Committee and Col. Carnegie had broken faith in not carrying out their promise to hold a portion of the contract until the Russell proposal had been completed. He declared that the Russell Company's equipment was fully capable for the work, as had later been proved by their success in making "graze" fuses. He was positive that they could have done just as well with "time" fuses.

### "Pressure" on Shell Committee.

A particularly interesting point in the evidence of Lloyd Harris was his statement that Col. Carnegie

had said the reason the contracts had been let to United States firms was because "pressure had been brought to bear to place these contracts." This was said by Col. Carnegie on May 26th when Mr. Harris and Mr. Russell had come to Ottawa with their definite proposal, only to be informed that "it was unfortunate but the contracts had already been let." They had protested vigorously and had a "heart to heart" talk of some three hours with Col. Carnegie and General Bertram, chairman of the Shell Committee, in the course of which Col. Carnegie made the statement as to "pressure." Later on in his evidence, Mr. Harris stated that the impression he had got at the time was that the "pressure" had come from some one higher up in the Shell Committee.

Another interesting point was the statement by Mr. Harris that early in October, 1915, he had given all the information at his disposal in the whole matter of the fuse contracts to Sir Robert Borden, first verbally and later in two letters.

## AS TO PATRONAGE

From the wilderness of the Borden Nationalist-Conservative party's devotion to the system of patronage in the conduct of the country's business one voice has at last been heard crying out in protest. Sir George Foster, the veteran parliamentarian, is the one man among the members of the Borden government who has dared to speak in condemnation of the system which has been carried to such lengths in the past four years, and in view of the record of these four years and the notoriety which the system has forced upon itself, his utterance may fairly be regarded as the well-weighed protest of a man of ripe experience who knew whereof he spoke. It was in his speech on the Budget, on February 17th, that Sir George delivered himself of his views on the subject, as follows:

### Sir George Foster's Protest.

"Now, as to patronage, I have been thirty-four years in public life; I have been a pretty close student of political parties and political history in this country, and I have simply this to say—I give it as my individual opinion—that in the whole course of my political life I cannot point to a single instance where political patronage ever helped the status of the bench, ever helped the status of the Civil Service, ever helped in the economy of their administration the status of public administrators, no matter what functions they performed, never helped a member of Parliament in reality, never helped a Government in reality; it almost always causes the dry rot and disintegration that break up government after government and party after party, and I wish now, in the white heat and light of this great contest and struggle and the self-sacrifice that we are called upon to make, that we might speak from the heart out, and make an agreement in this country between both parties, that hereafter patronage shall not be applied by political parties in the construction of our public works. Now, that is a frank admission. Some may say to me that I have no right to make it. I presume upon my grey beard and thirty-four years in public life, and I make that statement for what it is worth. I will just append to that one single sentence, and it is this: that if there is any laxity in the public virtue of this country to-day, if there is any canker of public corruption in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred you can trace it to the baleful effect of political party patronage."

### A Liberal Suggestion.

Sir George was given a lead for his unexpectedly frank declaration by Mr. A. K. MacLean, Liberal member (Halifax), who preceded the Minister in the debate. In the course of his able criticism of the budget proposals of the Minister of Finance, Mr. MacLean took high and only too well justified ground in an appeal for a revision of the business methods of the present administration, and referred particularly to the evils of the patronage system in the following words:

"Since the beginning of the War we have realized perhaps as never before the grip that patronage and other evils has upon our conduct of public business. We know it exists in disgusting proportions. I have seen it myself. We all have seen it. More than that, I want to say I know of some Ministers who have fought against it. I know of other Ministers who have succumbed. WHEN IS IT TO END? WHY NOT NOW? Why not make a determined and united set upon the evils of patronage and corruption? I know that politics is not the only sphere that requires regeneration, but there is no better place to give leading to a new and better regime than in the nation's public and parliamentary life."

### Patronage Rampant Since War

The curse of the patronage system, tending as it inevitably does to petty graft in all public expenditures and to inefficiency on the part of public employees and officials who owe their appointments mainly if not altogether to political influence, has been more apparent than ever since the War commenced. It has been proved over and over again in the evidence before the Public Accounts Committee in the past two years as well as in the revelations before the Davidson Commission. It has been charged and proved in scores of cases on the floor of the House of Commons and little if any attempt has been made by the Government to disprove it, undoubtedly because it cannot be disproved. The facts show that the system of patronage has been deliberately fostered by the Borden government in the first place to reward party friends for services rendered, and now chiefly to ensure political support and party service when it may be most required.