

GREAT BRITAIN DID NOT EMPLOY COL. J. WESLEY ALLISON.

NOTWITHSTANDING statements made in the House of Commons and elsewhere by General Sir Sam Hughes, and which are quoted below, we now find that J. Wesley Allison has not at any time since the war started acted as an agent for the British War Office in New York or elsewhere in connection with the purchase of supplies.

On Wednesday, August 9th, 1916, the Under-Secretary for War, Mr. Forster in answer to a question asked by Mr. McVeagh, M.P., in the British House of Commons made the following reply. (See British Hansard, Page 1073.)

Question:

Mr. McVeagh:—To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office, whether he can say if Mr. J. Wesley Allison has been operating in New York for the War Office; and, if so, in what capacity and to what extent has he purchased picric acid?

Answer:

Mr. Forster:—I cannot find that this gentleman has been acting for the War Office.

This is a remarkable statement, particularly in view of the fact that General Sir Sam Hughes has on various occasions led the people of Canada to believe that Col. J. Wesley Allison was acting for the British Government. In order that there may be no misapprehension as to what Sir Sam Hughes stated we quote the following:—

“On tri-ni tro-toinol, picric acid, copper, brass, zinc, ammunition of various kinds, Col. Allison undoubtedly saved upwards of 50,000,000 to Great Britain and Canada. Even when the British Government wanted a hundred rifles for testing purposes, they applied to Col. Allison for them.”

(Sir Sam Hughes in House of Commons, March 2nd. See Daily Unrevised Hansard, page 1409.)

Again on another occasion Sir Sam when speaking of the sale to the British War Office on defective Canadian ammunition stated:—

“This ammunition was first ordered, I say by the members of the Vickers firm. Finally, it was ordered by Col. J. Wesley Allison, who has the honor of being the Vickers representative, and who had, and still has, the honor of having been selected by the special representative of the British Government as agent in the United States of America in respect of very large matters of international concern. He is a gentleman who to-day stands high in the estimation of the people of the country, not from fear.”

(Sir Sam Hughes in House of Commons, May 13th, 1916. See Daily Unrevised Hansard, page 4051.)

Again on May 31st when Sir Sam Hughes was giving evidence before the Meredith-Duff Commission he made the following statement in reference to Col. Allison being a representative of the British Government:—

“The point that is not made clear is the position I put Allison in at first, to go down to New York or to the United States at the time I told you about, when we were being importuned by the British Government, to get them this, that and the other.

“But there was nothing whatever settled as to what the remuneration of the gentlemen on

this proposed committee would be. I said that whatever the remuneration would be it would have to be determined by Lord Kitchener. . . .
“The point I wanted to make was, in justice to Allison, because all this trouble about Allison started over the time I nominated him for that purchasing commission for the British Government.”

(See evidence Royal Commission, May 31st, 1916. Unrevised edition, pages 1240 and 1241.)

With this official statement from the British War Office it can be settled once and for all that J. Wesley Allison was never agent for the British Government. The question now arises, who was he acting for, and the only answer that can be given is that it was for the Canadian Government and the Canadian Government alone must be held responsible for his actions. We believe they recognize this or he would never have been deprived of his honorary colonelcy.

THE WATCH DOG OF THE TREASURY.

JOHN FRASER, Auditor-General of Canada has been sent by the Government to England upon an important mission. Mr. Fraser is armed with authority from the Governor-in-Council to investigate, and report upon expenditures in connection with the Canadian troops overseas. It will be his duty to ascertain the value of Canadian equipment in England, to make a survey of the accounts of the Paymaster and Quartermaster-General, and to discover what is the amount of the Dominion's indebtedness to the Motherland for expenditures incurred in connection with the Canadian troops in England and at the front. So far Canada's recorded war expenditure totals something over \$300,000,000, but this does not include amounts being charged up by the War Office.

Since the war commenced no man has had a more difficult, and delicate task assigned to him than Auditor General Fraser. He has been compelled to carefully survey all expenditures, and to make sure that constitutional authority has been secured for such expenditures. Through his efforts several attempted raids upon the treasury have been nipped in the bud, while several refunds have been secured through his agency. In the course of his duties he has incurred the bitter displeasure of General Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia, particularly in connection with his evidence before the Davidson Commission regarding the sale to the British Admiralty through J. Wesley Allison of several million rounds of small arms ammunition. So deeply annoyed was the Minister at the disclosure of the transaction that in the Commons last session he declared that “Col. Allison had more honor in his little finger than the auditor-general had in his whole carcass.”

Now the Government, alarmed because of the lack of reports from General Hughes' appointees in England, has sent Auditor-General Fraser overseas to look over their books, and to make a report upon the financial conditions over there. Hitherto those in authority overseas appear to have taken the ground that they were a law unto themselves, and not accountable for their actions to the Canadian Government.