

Editorial

THE CANADIAN SHELL COMMITTEE.

"D. A. Thomas has left us—with a rather bad taste in our mouths," says a contemporary. This remark precludes serious charges against General Bertram, Mr. Thomas Cantley and Mr. Geo. Watts. Because the Nova Scotia Steel Company and Canadian Allis-Chalmers Limited are both busy, it is insinuated that this is due to the fact that Mr. Cantley and Mr. Watts are members of the Canadian Shell Committee.

Innuendoes of this type are an old story. Many an opposition newspaper has made them. And General Bertram, Premier Borden, General Hughes, Mr. D. A. Thomas and others have issued indignant statements refuting such insinuations.

The Canadian Engineer has been informed by the highest authorities that Mr. Cantley and Mr. Watts had absolutely no say as to what firms should receive contracts. They were not consulted in the slightest regarding such matters. General Bertram himself awarded the contracts, and the other members of the Shell Committee advised merely regarding manufacturing and technical matters.

The country is greatly indebted to General Bertram, Mr. Cantley and Mr. Watts for having given much valuable time to this work. They got no pay and no reward. The orders which their firms received would have undoubtedly gone to those firms anyway, because their vast equipment was needed and was sure to have been utilized. The Nova Scotia Steel Company and Canadian Allis-Chalmers Limited have undoubtedly been discriminated against rather than favored on account of the membership of Mr. Cantley and Mr. Watts on the Shell Committee.

Mr. Cantley has spent large sums, for which he has not and will not be remunerated, on experimental work, the benefit of which he gave freely to the Shell Committee for the general good. The company of which Mr. Watts is an executive has been one of the foremost subscribers, among our industries, in men and money for war purposes.

Mr. Frank Jones, manager of the Canada Cement Company, is reputed as having "held up" the Premier for a shell contract by threats of publicity. Mr. Jones denies this, and says that the statement which appeared in our contemporary is entirely unfounded. Mr. Jones claims that he got his contract through the regular channels, and has written a letter to Sir Robert Borden repudiating the slur upon the Premier and the Shell Committee.

Regarding prices, it need only be said that the British Government itself set the prices for all contracts, and that General Bertram has saved \$14,896,000 out of the prices by awarding contracts at lower prices than those set by the British War Office. And this figure, we believe, is the balance remaining after paying all expenses of the Shell Committee.

General Bertram says: "I am not worrying much about these charges of extravagance and favoritism. I know the British War Office has absolute confidence that we are trying to get the largest possible output at the smallest possible cost."

Early in the war an order for 200,000 shells was placed with the Minister of Militia for distribution in the United States. General Hughes asked a number of prominent Canadian manufacturers whether those shells could not be made in Canada. Although they had had no experience in shell making, the manufacturers thought they would like to try it, and General Hughes urged the British Government to permit him to place the orders in Canada. The British War Office said: "Well, what will the price be?" The Canadian manufacturers quoted \$5.15, knowing that they would have to buy a great quantity of new machinery which would have to be scrapped promptly if no further shell orders were to follow, and knowing that a large waste of energy and material would be involved in their initial endeavors to make these shells. The British Government apparently was satisfied with this price of \$5.15 and accepted the offer. It is stated that not a single manufacturer made any money on this first order, and that as late as last February every manufacturer of shells was very much out of pocket.

When the first order had been completed, General Hughes urged the War Office to place further orders in Canada, and this they consented to do, but said that the price would have to be lower. The War Office offered a lower price, which was accepted by the Canadian manufacturers. From time to time since then the price has been lowered, but the price was always set by the British War Office until within the last few weeks, when a call for tenders was announced.

An interesting side-light on the matter of prices is that a certain prominent Montreal manufacturer who is turning out about 5,000 shells daily, was offered \$1 per shell more than he is getting from the Shell Committee, if he would take a sub-contract for the same sized shells from an United States steel company. And we believe that statistics show that Canadian manufacturers are now selling shells at a cost equal to, and even lower than, the cost of producing such shells for many years past in the Woolwich and other government arsenals.

STRATEGY OF RESEARCH.

No excuse is necessary for reiterating the need for concentrated efforts in the development of Canadian resources, or in adopting the above caption from the Times' Engineering Supplement. Prof. J. A. Fleming recently delivered an address on "Science in the War and After the War" in which, when directing attention to the future, he said: "It must be remembered that after this war is over in a military sense, we shall immediately begin another war of a different kind, in which the weapons will not be bullets and shells, but our national powers of invention, scientific research, commercial organization, manufacturing capabilities, and education, and these will be pitted against those of a highly organized Germany, determined to win back in commerce by any and every means, fair or foul, that which has been lost in war, and that commercial and industrial war will be waged by our