

DRUG CASE No. 3.

EXHORBITANT PRICES PAID FOR DRUGS AT VALCARTIER.

The Contractor a sister of Albert Sevigny, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons.

Drugs and medical supplies of all kinds for the First Canadian Contingent, while at Valcartier Camp, were supplied by Mdme G. P. Plamondon of Quebec. The total of her accounts for goods supplied at Valcartier was about \$23,200. Overcharges running all the way from 70% to 200% and even 300% were proved by the sworn testimony of an expert druggist.

Mdme Plamondon, who has continued the drug business of her late husband in Quebec, held the contract for supply of drugs to the permanent military forces at Quebec for the year 1914-15. Her name was put on the Government patronage list two years previously at the request of her brother, Mr. Albert Sevigny, Nationalist member for Dorchester and Deputy Speaker of the House. Mr. Sevigny, giving evidence before the Public Accounts Committee on April 10th, admitted this under oath, and also admitted that he had written letters to the Paymaster General of the Militia Department asking expedition in the payment of accounts due Mdme Plamondon.

Mr. Henry Watters, druggist of Ottawa, in the trade 45 years and recognized as thoroughly competent to tell drug prices, gave evidence on April 9th, comparing Mdme Plamondon's prices, charged the Government with the prevailing trade prices as shown on current price lists of the leading wholesale drug firms of Canada, Mr. Watters demonstrated scandalous overcharges from 70 to 300 per cent, even after allowing for any change in prices due to the War.

Binoculars

It was in the purchase of binoculars for the officers of the Canadian expeditionary forces that the full effect of the Tory patronage system, with its inevitable middleman, was proved most plainly. When it came to binoculars there was no question of just one middleman—the sworn evidence proves that there had to be two, or three, or even four—and of course every one of them had to have his “bit.”

And it was no small “bit” either, as witness the evidence that one particular pair of glasses were purchased at wholesale by the first man for \$9, and finally reached the Government at a net cost of \$58. Some profit!