

Emergency Rations.

Canada's Disgraceful Dog Biscuit Scandal.

The emergency food scandal, so-called, is one of the most contemptible instances of petty speculation, where absolute integrity should have been expected, that even the record of this Government can show. To rob the people is bad enough in all conscience, but to put in the hands of our soldiers, going thousands of miles away to a hostile country, a worthless article upon which, in case of emergency, their very lives would depend, is a foul crime which makes one's blood boil.

It is doubtful if the horrors of war ever have been, or can be, exaggerated. War time has been a time when few honest men made money and many rogues prospered. Running through the history of wars, adding to its evils, increasing its sufferings, are to be seen the dark pages of the dishonest army contractor. The fact that heartless scamps, with robbery at heart, and a "pull" with the department making purchases, hover like vultures about the outfitting of men going to war, is a reason for greater caution, not an excuse for criminal carelessness. With a weak or corrupt head to the Militia Department, the soldiers may find they have bayonets which crumble like tin, blankets that fall to pieces in a

few days, boots with paper soles, food that is mouldy. They find the dishonesty of the rascally contractor at home as dangerous as the bullet of the enemy abroad.

WITH THE LESSONS OF RECENT WARS

before us, the embalmed beef of the United States army still smelling in the nostrils of the world, one would suppose the Canadian Militia Department would have shown the utmost care to guard against imposition. Our boys freely gave up employment, the comforts of home, sundered many tender ties and gallantly went forth to a distant land to show the world Canadians were loyal to their Queen and had strong right arms to defend the Empire and uphold the Flag. Right nobly have they acquitted themselves, and hundreds of little mounds on the lonely veldts of Africa mark the last resting place of heroes who have been making history. With what bitter shame and burning indignation do the people of Canada learn how the brave fellows have been treated by our Government. Reluctantly they were sent, and then only after such

A WAVE OF POPULAR OPINION

as the Laurier Government dare no longer try to stem. Their payment was opposed, and now, it turns out, so far as investigated, their supplies were fraudulent. Enormous expenditures have been made, but so far only the emergency ration supply has been looked into. The result came with the force of a shock.

No amount of partisan pleading, no cracking of party whip; no tricks of the pettifogger or official whitewash can cover up the damning facts. Hatch's Protose, manufactured in Montreal, had been tested over a year ago at Kingston, and the results seemed to prove it to be a concentrated food of great value, a few ounces a day keeping men in good health and condition for a month.

THE STORY OF A CRIME.

It is not necessary to weary the public with a repetition of details which have already had wide publicity. The Government refused to consider an offer to furnish the contingent with concentrated food, an offer made in writing and verbally by Mr. Hatch, the inventor and manufacturer of Protose; refused to entertain an offer made by the Bovril Company, who supply emergency rations to the whole British army, and had supplied their well-known concentrated food very satisfactorily to the Canadian Government for the Geological survey parties; refused to consider any offer from anybody, saying they did not intend supplying the soldiers with any emergency rations. Then suddenly something happened, and the Department of Militia gave a contract to one Dr. Devlin, of Montreal, a political supporter; at his own price, without inviting competition; without allowing any of the known manufacturers or dealers in such foods to know anything about it. The whole deal was effected in one day, for seven thousand cans of what was represented to be the Hatch's food tested at Kingston.

IT WAS EXPOSED IN TIME.

Investigation shows that before the stuff was paid for, Hatch, the manufacturer of the Protose used at Kingston, discovered what was being done, and wrote directly to the Minister of Militia, warning him that the material being supplied for the troops going to South Africa was not his Protose at all, but a cheap substitute imported from the United States.

It is unpleasant to have to say unkind things of a Canadian who had heretofore been regarded as an honourable gentleman; but the suspicious fact cannot be lost sight of that THIS MOST IMPORTANT LETTER, REVEALING A PRIMA FACIE CASE OF FRAUD, WAS SUPPRESSED BY THE MINISTER!

He admits he received it, but communicated its contents to no official of his department, to no living soul but the contractor being charged with fraud!

He did not even acknowledge the receipt of this letter, did not put it on file among the records of his department. Can it be doubted that a deliberate effort was being made to cover up a piece of rascality? Why?

WHO WOULD HAVE ANY OBJECT IN COVERING UP THE FACTS OF THE GUILTY TRANSACTION BUT THE CONTRACTOR AND HIS ACCOMPLICES?

By no order of the Minister, but without that chieftain's knowledge, Capt. Benoit, the secretary of the Department of Militia, happened to be in Halifax when the food was being shipped, and had a box of it opened and took a couple of cans with him to Ottawa. There he handed them over to the Inland Revenue Department for analysis. This was all done without knowing that the Minister of Militia, himself, already had knowledge that a fraud was being perpetrated.

What did the official analysis reveal? The report of Thomas Macfarlane, chief analyst of the laboratory of the Inland Revenue Department, dated February 12, 1900, published on page 229 of the Emergency Rations Committee report, says:

"Sample 'A' is marked 'delivered at Halifax, 24-1-1900, A. Benoit,' and is deficient in fat compared with sample 'B.' It is, however, fully equal to the latter, so far as regards Proteids. Since the average percentage of proteids in wheat is about 12, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THIS 'PROTEID POWDER' IS A VERY CONCENTRATED FOOD, OR IS ENTITLED TO ITS NAME, OR HAS A FOOD VALUE EQUIVALENT TO \$2 PER POUND."

The discovery of this official report, and that this report was in the hands of the Militia Department before the Devlin bill was paid, was all that was necessary to complete the evidence that a fraud had been perpetrated.

Dr. Benjamin Russell, M.P. for Halifax, who seemed to think he was on the committee as the defender of the guilty, was very wrathly when this report was discovered and pronounced it "a piece of impertinence" on the part of the official analyst. What business had the analyst to warn his employers, the Government, that they were being defrauded?

THE MONEY WAS PAID.

With the analyst's report as a record of his department; with the solemn warning of the undoubted manufacturer of the genuine Protose in his pocket; with unquestionable evidence now that fraud was being perpetrated, the Minister had Devlin paid the full amount of his contract, \$4,600. The chief of the Canadian War Department allowed our soldiers to go away to the wilderness, believing that they had in their knapsacks little cans of food which had been tried and proved, and would keep them alive and in health, under hard work, for five days when away from other food supply; allowed them to go when he had full knowledge that it was a bogus article, made by a company that had no existence and bearing a label which was a lie.

These facts have been established by uncon-
troverted evidence, on oath, and have not been and cannot be refuted.

If there was any thought that the Government were innocent victims in this matter, it was removed by the conduct of the investigation. From the very first moment the charge was made in Parliament, throughout the investigation and in dealing with the committee's reports in the House, there was one long-continued, bold and partially successful effort at suppressing evidence and keeping the facts from the public.

TRYING TO COVER IT UP.

For this reason the public were not permitted to know who Dr. Devlin paid, where all the \$4,600 went to, or exactly what substance was sent out to feed our soldiers with. It was stated in Parliament that it was broken dog biscuit from Newark, New Jersey. Be this as it may, it bore a suspicious resemblance to something of the kind, was imported from the United States in potato bags concealed in trunks, ground up in a coffee mill in Montreal, rammed with a wooden stick into paint cans, covered with a label printed at the Montreal Herald office, and sold to the Government for \$2 a pound.

Very good broken biscuit, made for human food and still fit for such, is sold for five or six cents a pound. What this stuff really cost, the public were not permitted to know, but such of it as came through the Custom house was valued by Dr. Devlin at 30 cents a pound. He would not put in his invoices, and there is no reason to believe it cost anything like 30 cents.

THE CONTRACTOR GETS OUT.

It was a noteworthy fact that this contractor and importer attended the investigation, day after day, seated at the elbow of Dr. Russell, M.P., the leader of the Government side of the committee, prompting him, dictating questions and making suggestions. When the time came for hearing his own statement; when the time came for Dr. Devlin to go on the stand and tell all about his connection with the Department of Militia and the Government of Canada in this most iniquitous transaction, he was found to have left the city (after spending several hours in the Liberal caucus room in the Parliament building) leaving word that he had gone to New York.

Did the committee refuse to report till they had his evidence? Not much. When they found Dr. Devlin was out of the way the investigation closed in short order.

It is not to be wondered at that several of the Government's usual supporters in the House of Commons refused to vote for the majority report, whitewashing the Government; refused to palliate the outrage or cover up the crime which had been committed. By the criminal carelessness, or complicity of the Government, not only has the country been robbed, but a cruel wrong has been done our brave soldiers, and the people of Canada deeply feel it.

WON'T TOLERATE THE WHITEWASHING.

Political lawyers with prospective judgeships dangling before their eyes, may degrade themselves by being apologists for what has been done. But the course of those, until now Government supporters, who boldly stamp their disapproval on the whitewashing report and voted with the Opposition, gives but an indication of the feeling throughout Canada.

When the name "Liberal" becomes synonymous with rascality, in the great affairs of a nation or the minor affairs of a province, it is time

for honest, honourable and upright men to get out of the Liberal party.

Those who did not care whether Canada's soldiers were being fed on first class rations or the refuse of dog kennels in New Jersey, so that they could take money out of the public treasury and put it into the pockets of political supporters, are no fit men to entrust with the destinies of Canada.

LATE EVIDENCE.

WHAT THE FOOD WAS LIKE.

The Department of Militia made a great pretence, while the investigation was going on, of cabling to South Africa to have the food examined and tested, to ascertain how it had served for the purpose of emergency diet. Strangely enough, if any messages really were sent at all, no answer was received, or it was so stated when the committee rose. The committee were also told that samples of the food had been sent for and would be out here from Africa to show what condition it was in. If the department got any such samples the public were none the wiser for it. Like all other facts in this case that could possibly be suppressed by the Government this evidence,—if it ever really was sent for—has been stored away in the secret archives of the department to be conveniently "lost," as were the samples of Hatch's food used at Kingston.

A RETURNED SOLDIER'S STORY.

But this world is pretty small after all. An invalided Canadian soldier came back, some thousands of miles, from South Africa, and he had in his knapsack one of the very cans of powdered dog biscuit the Government sent out. He brought it back with him to show the people of Canada what kind of stuff the Canadian militia sent out to feed their soldiers on, not knowing about any investigation which had been held.

The stuff was rancid, and the soldiers had thrown most of it away by the roadside; had found it to be **ABSOLUTELY WORTHLESS, THIS FOOD THAT COST CANADA BETWEEN FOUR AND FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS.**

Not one ounce of it had ever been used for food, as even a dog would not eat it after it had been carried some six thousand miles, to a tropical climate, in cheap cans that were not air tight. It was putrid!

This accidental piece of evidence, brought back by the sick soldier, after the committee and Parliament had closed, was the finishing stroke to the Government's record of shame. It closes the mouths of those who dared to say that "even if the food was not a concentrated ration, it was a good, wholesome article, conveniently packed and useful as an auxiliary to any other ration." It was worth little when it was purchased; it was worth nothing when the time came to use it.

IT IS "NOT WORTH A CENT."

The following extract, sent to Dr. Thett, of Guelph, by his son, Kenyon, of "D" Battery, South Africa, gives another unprejudiced opinion of a soldier who has had actual experience with the notorious emergency rations which the Liberal majority in Parliament endorsed as being "a wholesome and serviceable ration":

"I see by the papers that the Government is having a hot time over the emergency ration. Well, to tell the truth, it is rotten, or, in polite language, not worth a cent. It looks like bran, and has no substance at all. The labels say it is delicious with soup, but where there is soup you don't get emergency rations. One thing that speaks badly for it is that two or three large boxes, which were lying open, 'were never touched.' If it had been the English ration it would have been 'out of sight' in short order. Some of us threw it away and used the cans for carrying grease in; when inspection came we were to be charged \$1.50 for it, but for some reason or other they changed their minds."