

Shelburne
May 21st - 1916

Shell
work
My dear Dad

I am sorry not to have written to you oftener. I owe you two letters. Thank you very much for your photo which I think is quite a good one though not as grand as the one you are going to get for us as soon as peace is declared. I like your picture rather better than the one of Mother. You were holding yourself better. Mother usually sits or stands so straight that it seems a pity for her photo to make her look stooped.

I have had a very strenuous time, beginning about the week Mother left. It was a very great struggle to get away our first shipment of 8" shells about a week ago.

Having done that,² last week I was again able to show my face in Ottawa after an absence of a couple of months.

The War Office apparently are very anxious to get 8" shells, and we have a long struggle ahead at the factory to meet their requirements.

I dropped into the Fuse Engraving for a short time or two afternoons. There is a great amount of time and money being wasted on that silly business and peoples attention is diverted from useful channels into reading very garbled accounts that appear in our papers.

They have found

(!) That manufacturers of good standing like ourselves (in Canada) were all so loaded up with lucrative shell business

that we would not touch the
fuse work at any price.

(2) That the same was true
of most recognized firms in the
States.

3 That Lloyd Harris and
T.A. Russell would take a contract
~~but~~ and were promised a contract
but (if the truth were known)
other Canadian manufacturers
protested because we had been
told that our future shell
work depended on fuse deliveries!

4 That the work in the States
was undertaken by a syndicate
who arranged as brokers to
secure the orders and to induce
manufacturers to carry out the
orders. Their commission was
arranged at so much per ~~shell~~
fuse as ^{and when} they were paid for.

That Sam Hughes instead of using recognized brokers to do his work used individuals of his own choosing - like McBain, who bought Val Cartier, Tommy Russel who bought motor trucks and Allison who bought revolvers

So far I am very glad to see that there is no evidence of money being used to influence either the Shell Committee or the Militia Department.

You have probably read a great deal of nonsense about the position of the contracting members of the Shell Committee. It has been said that they were taking a great chance of loss with no possible gain to balance up.

As a matter of fact before the original contracts were closed with the War Office, all the responsibility had been shelved from the

individual contracting members
 on to their respective Companies
 who actually had a much better
 chance of making money than of
 losing it. For example, the Nova
 Scotia Steel Co. was behind
 Mr Bentley in saying that they
 would produce the forgings at
 \$1²⁰. The Nova Scotia Steel Co.,
 the Canada Foundry Company, John
 Beaman + Sons, Goldie McCulloch
 and ourselves were behind ^{Ed. Beaman} the
 Committee in undertaking to machine
 and assemble the shells at \$5¹⁰.
 While the Canadian General Electric
 Company and several others were
 behind Mr Watts (of the C.G.E. and
 Shell Committee) in undertaking
 to make all the minor components
 at prices to bring the total within
 the necessary amount.

If, in spite of all these people
 it was found impossible to carry

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out an order for \$1,710,000⁰⁰,
the Committee had the assurance
of Sir Robert Borden that the
Government would stand behind
them. So you see there was
no chance of loss; and to talk
of ^{their} working for a profit is simply
far-fetched nonsense.

In actual effect
they were purely
Administrators.

You have probably heard that
the manufacturing members of
the Committee were placed in
a difficult position in having to
give contracts to themselves. The
difficulty is purely imaginary.

Not one big manufacturer in
Canada would have been one bit
better off to have had a member
on the Committee. We have, to tell
the honest truth, had all the
work we were able to handle
and more. No member of the
Shell Committee had to worry
about keeping up prices to help
his own firm.

And large manufacturers had very little worry about keeping up prices. The simple English system of paying everyone the same price who got their contracts at the same time, was adopted and prices were efficiently held up by ~~it~~ (you might almost say public opinion) at least public political opinion of both parties - because the small manufacturers, in droves, came to Ottawa, often with their local M.P.'s to plead that if a reduction were made they would be ruined.

The one thing that should impress everyone, especially the War Office, with the honesty of purpose actuating the Shell Committee is the fact that, in spite of the War Office

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having authorized a ^{high price} and in
spite of the demands of their
friends that we be given the
high price, the price was
voluntarily beaten down by
the Committee to such an
extent that they came out
\$42,000,000⁰⁰ ahead. And by
no accident did it leak out
to us that we were not getting
absolutely all the War Office
would pay!

So much for shells

Lois and Alice and I drove to
the Golf Club yesterday and had
a preliminary look about and
picked some flowers.

Today Mrs. Drwin took us all
for a long drive in her Ford.
For two weeks we had had
a great deal of wet weather

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but the best two or three days have been beautifully fine and today nice and warm as well.

We have flower beds dug all around our back yard and it is all nice and clean with a sand pile in one corner for Alice. I don't think any of us will leave Sherbrooke this summer so we will do our best to make things nice here. I am working hard enough so that I feel I am justified in asking God to stay with me. Also it looks about an even chance as to whether or not the time will come for me to enlist and in that case we would need all our money to get along with.

It was exceedingly hard luck about Hugh's leave being cancelled. How about Forty? Is he in the same fix?

Incl Charlie is coming out next Sunday to be a Godfather to the baby. I hate to load him up with a raft of names and as my family want "Edward" and as the Harringtons want "Harrington" I don't know whether we should not cut out the "John" altogether.

Lois' last treatment of eating as little as possible and drinking nothing at meals seems to be the right thing. She is very much lighter and seems quite well. She dug a tremendous amount in the garden and seemed all the better for it.

Both the kids are well

The baby has four teeth now and sits up instead of lying down all the time. He ^{John} fairly shouts at Alice when she annoy him or takes anything away from him.

We are having fly-screens put on all the house. All the rest of my Company and friends have motors but I tell Lois that we can take a horse twice a day every day this summer and still come out cheaper than buying a motor car. We have now got a competent cook and a good nurse so that Lois, for the first time in our experience could go away for a week if she wanted to, without calling on any outside assistance. What is Ken doing with himself? I could start him on at inspecting 8" shells at 25 cents an hour

with a chance of making quite a lot more if he could do the work.

Will you please find out from Beak and tell us the name of the marmalade you were using when we were there. We took down the name but lost it.

What are the prospects of your coming east for a trip. We could give you some paddling and driving and perhaps some trout-fishing and we can show you a couple of pretty good grand children.

With love and hoping to have another letter from you soon

Your affect son

Edward S. Winslow.