

difficult to make with absolute accuracy as between the various departments. It has, however, been easy for me to determine the precise number of days that I have been doing work of investigator, and I have in no case charged for any more or any less time than I have been so occupied. Sometimes part of a day is charged against one department, and part against another. In determining how much of each day is to be charged against a particular department, I have considered the number of investigations that I have had for the various departments during the itinerary under consideration, and have made the fairest and most equitable apportionment that I could under the circumstances, as between the various departments.

I may say that immediately on receipt of Hansard containing Mr. McKenzie's observations in this connection, I wrote the Hon. Mr. Hazen somewhat fully with regard to the matter.

Trusting that the foregoing information will be sufficient for the purpose of the Auditor General, I remain,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) H. P. Duchemin.

I would not for one moment think of taking up so much time of the House, were it not that I was flatly charged, in Hansard of March 3, 1915, with making a mis-statement. Mr. Duchemin says that he was working on these returns on the 11th and 12th of September, 1912, when he is on record as saying that they were out of his hands and sent to the department on the 7th and 9th of that month. When I found those returns, knowing the facts from my local knowledge, I felt that I was perfectly justified in bringing to the attention of the Government the fact that it was overcharged in this connection. The \$128 and some cents charged here should be only \$21.35. The Government should find out if it has overpaid Mr. Duchemin to that extent, in proportion on the \$6,500 or nearly \$7,000 that he received. The result of my investigation justifies me in the statement that I have made, and the Customs Department was not justified in charging me with having made a mis-statement.

Hon. J. D. REID (Minister of Customs): This matter was brought to the attention of the Government by the hon. member for North Cape Breton (Mr. McKenzie) during the session of 1914. I was very sorry that the hon. member took the opportunity of bringing it up when I was not present. He brought it up when the estimates of the Public Works Department were before the House, and I had not an opportunity of replying to him at that time. If I had had, there would not perhaps have been this misunderstanding. Evidently from the attitude of the hon. member in this House, he

[Mr. McKenzie,]

has some grievance, so far as Mr. Duchemin is concerned, and he is a little wrathful over the reply given by the Customs Department.

4 p.m. Personally I did not wish to give an answer that would hurt the feelings of the hon. member; but, in answering the question, I had to state that the charges made were either true or untrue. The records in the Customs Department and, so far as I know, the evidence before the hon. member for North Cape Breton, did not justify the statement made by him. I have never seen Mr. Duchemin and I did not know anything about him until I had made inquiries after his name had been brought to the attention of the House. I have made inquiries of hon. members on the opposite side of the House who know Mr. Duchemin, and they tell me that he is an upright, honourable, honest man, and that any decision that he would give in any case on which he was acting as judge, would be fair and honest so far as he was able to decide. Therefore was it fair for the hon. member for North Cape Breton shielding himself behind this House, to ask the question he did with reference to Mr. Duchemin?

Mr. McKENZIE: If the minister will look into the matter he will find that I did not ask any such question.

Mr. REID: If the records of Hansard are as I understand they are, the hon. member asked the question for the hon. member for Guysborough (Mr. Sinclair).

Mr. McKENZIE: Not at all.

Mr. REID: At all events, the question was asked. Was it fair to ask such a question as this:

Is it the intention of the Government to take steps to recover from the said H. P. Duchemin the money so obtained by him?

Mr. McKENZIE: I did not ask that question.

Mr. REID: Well, it was asked by the hon. member for Guysborough. The answer was that the statements made in 1914, as recorded in Hansard were untrue.

The hon. member for North Cape Breton has made the statement that Mr. Duchemin sent to the Customs Department six different accounts, that is, an account for each of the six men on whom an investigation was held. That is not in accordance with the facts.