

Public Accounts Committee.

McLaughlin direct, over and above the 20 per cent extracted from the farmers in connection with the Trent Canal? Were the cheques in payment for the damages above referred to made payable to the farmers interested, or were the 20 per cent extractions deducted by the government and the cheques given to Mr. McLaughlin?" These are the questions that were asked, as brought out in evidence by my learned friends the last day. I may say, Mr. Chairman, to avoid trouble asking questions in this matter, I understood these things had been done, in general terms; and I will not go into it. I stated in my speech—I presume I can ask myself: "Did you say in your speech that in addition to that, this gentleman has been paid his legal fees for his connection with the settlement of these claims." I made that statement in the House, and I make it here to-day.

Mr. McLaughlin, as is proven by his own evidence—I did not catch it the last day, but I see it is in the evidence—says that he received fees from Sackett, for whom he had acted as legal solicitor. Therefore, that statement is borne out by Mr. McLaughlin's own evidence, and my statement turns out to be well founded in that case. Mr. McLaughlin, in his letter, which was read in the House by the Postmaster General on 14th June, said: "Mr. Hughes had these claims in hand, as representative of the constituency, from 1892 till 1896." This was brought out and sworn to by Mr. McLaughlin on the last day the committee met.

I may say that I shouldn't use words similar to the words used by the witness on a former occasion; I will simply say it is not true. The facts in connection with this are: that this dam was built a number of years ago—I don't know the exact year, but it can easily be ascertained. Mr. McLaughlin said it was 1891. I accept his statement, that it was 1891 or 1892; but the first case of flooding in connection with this dam was in connection with the extensive floods that occurred, I think, about 1893—I would not say for sure, but it was before the cofferdam was removed. There were extensive floods all along the line that year, whether there were damages or not. Some time—I would not like to state the year—Mr. Isaac, one of the gentleman named, approached me and asked me to take up his case about the claim for flooding the land. I immediately wrote to the Minister of Railways and Canals, stating the claim in this connection.

Mr. COWAN.—What has that to do with your charge about McLaughlin.

Mr. HUGHES.—Simply that Mr. Cowan insisted, on the last day, that I wouldn't take up Mr. Isaac's claim because he was a Liberal. That is a charge against me.

Mr. COWAN.—That is no charge against you.

Mr. HUGHES.—Yes; it is said that I would not take up his claim because he was a Liberal. The engineer was asked for a report, and evidence was taken, and for some time the engineer was in doubt that the floods in this particular year were caused by the unusual height of the water, and that the dam was not raised; and my statement was absolutely correct, that the water was not raised until the time I stated in my speech. Mr. Cowan waxed eloquent the other day, and asked Mr. McLaughlin whether it was true, and Mr. McLaughlin said it was not true. Mr. McLaughlin states in his letter here, that he was employed and paid for professional services in the ordinary way, and he also swore to it yesterday. I have already dealt with it, so I won't take up the time with it to-day. He also states, that "our fees have been paid wholly by the government." Mr. McLaughlin, in his letter to Mr. Mulock, which was read before the House of Commons, contradicts his evidence given here, where he states—

Mr. COWAN.—You are not asked to pass upon that now; it is in the report.

Mr. HUGHES.—It is a question of my veracity. I made that statement to the House and I am verifying it here to-day. The checks will show it and Mr. McLaughlin's own evidence. His first statement was different, but in cross examination he admits it. Now, sir, I shall not take up the time very long. I will say, Mr. Chairman, I have asked for some reports from the Department of Railways and Canals, at least