

Public Accounts Committee.

matter over, he received instructions from us as to future proceedings. I do not recollect what was said on this occasion by each of the ministers present, but the instructions given to Mr. Howell were concurred in by all. I dare say that in giving them I, being Minister of Justice, may have taken the most active part and that in that sense the instructions may be said to have been given by me.

35. I did approve of the proceedings theretofore taken, as far as I was aware of them.

36. The instructions we gave him were to proceed with the investigations, and to prosecute such of the guilty parties as he had or should get sufficient proofs against to entitle him to verdicts. A great deal had to be left to his discretion in the matter if the investigation or the prosecutions were to be effective. We had confidence in his prudence and judgment. The frauds which were ascertained or were believed to have been committed were of great magnitude and were accomplished by novel and dangerous devices, and it was in the public interest to expose and punish the perpetrators if possible, notwithstanding that the expense might be considerable.

37. I do not recollect when first I was aware that Mr. Sifton was accepting drafts for the expenses incurred in these cases. Such expenses were a matter between him and Mr. Howell, with which the government or the Dominion had nothing to do and incurred no obligation.

38. I cannot say whether the drafts were accepted by Mr. Sifton with the knowledge and consent of any of our colleagues of the government. As to myself the drafts were drawn and accepted without my knowledge; my consent had not been asked, and I presume this was the case as respects the other members of the government. Under the circumstances, if my consent had been asked, I could not have objected.

39 and 40. There was no arrangement with the government that I know of as to the payment of these drafts.

41. I have no correspondence on the subject referred to in this question.

42. Mr. Newcombe can answer this question better than I can.

43. I cannot fix the first date when I considered it proper that the expenses attendant upon the prosecutions in question should be paid out of the Dominion treasury. I am sure that I never had any doubt of it.

44. I do not recollect that the prosecution of Connolly and McGreevy was by direction of the House of Commons. If so, the printed proceedings will show it.

45. I am not aware of any case of criminal prosecution where the action decided upon by or through the Minister of Justice or otherwise was communicated to the officers of the Department of Justice, if there was nothing to be done by them in respect thereof, or until something was to be done by them. In this case nothing to be done by them was contemplated or expected until the taxation of the bills.

46. Until the bills came in I do not remember making any communication to the officers respecting the prosecutions or the frauds.

47. I communicated with no law officer of the Manitoba government on the subject, except Mr. Howell, and with him I had but one communication, of which I have already given an account.

48. I had no correspondence with him. I had no occasion to have any.

49. I had but the one conversation with Mr. Howell.

50. When I expressed my approval of Mr. Howell's proceedings theretofore, he had made some investigations as to the facts. I cannot now give details of them.

51. The instructions to him on the occasion referred to were not in writing, nor was any record made of them by me or by my direction. They were plain and well understood by all.

52. I was not aware that Mr. Sifton's name was on a note in a bank in Winnipeg upon which counsel and others had obtained advances to carry on these prosecutions at an early stage and long anterior to any payment of the Dominion government.

53. If there was such a note I cannot say whether it was signed by Mr. Sifton at the request or with the knowledge of any of the other members of the government.