

COMMITTEE ROOM,

SATURDAY, 29th July, 1899.

The Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts met this morning, Mr. FRASER (Guysboro') presiding.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES, M.P., volunteered to give evidence; and, being sworn, testified as follows:—

Mr. Chairman, I would not have appeared here as a witness this morning, but while I do not mind any jocular remarks made in this room on the occasion of the last meeting, a newspaper that is usually very fair, the *Toronto Globe*, and others in the country have published what, in my mind, are wrong versions of the matter.

Mr. Cowan objected to the witness giving evidence before the committee to correct a newspaper report.

Mr. HUGHES.—I am on oath, and what I wish to say, Mr. Chairman,—

Mr. Cowan again objected.

Mr. HUGHES.—Some time ago I brought the matter up in the House. I had reason, Mr. Chairman, to believe—

Mr. Cowan objected.

Mr. HUGHES.—I found that certain farmers having claims around Cameron Lake were—not that they were being charged—but that the Dominion of Canada was paying Messrs. Barron & Steers for legal services in connection with these cases; and I also found that Mr. R. J. McLaughlin, or the firm of McLaughlin & McDermid—whichever way they choose to take it—was also getting paid in connection with these same claims. Inquiries revealed that in connection with all the other claims for damages in flooding lands in connection with the raising of the water of the Trent Canal—

Mr. Cowan objected that this was not evidence.

Mr. HUGHES.—I am giving evidence that in no other cases along this canal was another solicitor employed but the government solicitors, that is, the agents of the government; and I may say in this case that Barron & Steers started to prepare whatever legal documents were necessary, without the intervention of other solicitors. In no other cases along this canal had other solicitors been employed, and no payments had been exacted by the government agents for any work, excepting government work, save and except, in the expenditure of some thousands of dollars (\$20,000 or \$30,000), some \$15 or \$18, and this in connection with legal fees where the titles had to be obtained from the old country. There was no outside legal work.

Mr. McLaughlin has also shown in his evidence that he in subsequent cases required the assistance of no other lawyer. Knowing this, I deemed it, in the interests of the people of that riding, that this was unfair. I asked the question of the Minister of Railways and Canals, and this question was brought out yesterday by my friend from Essex. I don't know whether he will object to my referring to it again. I asked that certain questions—

Mr. Cowan objected that if this statement was allowed to go down, there would be other speeches go down, too.

Mr. HUGHES.—I can easily get Mr. Borden to ask the question.

Mr. COWAN.—I think it would be better, if you did.

Mr. HUGHES.—Or I will ask myself the questions in interrogative form. The question was asked of the government—this was brought out by my learned friend the other day—"What sums had been paid for damages to lands from flooding on the shores of Cameron Lake since July 1st, 1896? What sums have been paid to Mr.