

Public Accounts Committee.

52. Were you 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. Was this note signed by him at the request or with the knowledge of the members of the government?

54. Did you, as Attorney General of Ontario or Minister of Justice, ever give your private note or accept a private draft to raise funds for a criminal prosecution?

55. If you produce an arrangement in writing touching this matter (referred to by Mr. Fitzpatrick), please state why this was not made an official record?

56. Have you knowledge of letters or correspondence respecting these prosecutions which you have not produced or which are not on official files?

57. If you say you are aware of fees taxed by the Department of Justice of from \$100 to \$45 a day for similar work, please state the cases and the counsel involved?

58. If you say the course adopted in these cases (Manitoba prosecutions) was in your opinion justified and necessary in the public interest, do you not think the government should have pursued the same course in connection with recent elections in the province of Ontario for the Dominion House? If not, why not?

Answers of Sir Oliver Mowat to the Interrogatories of the Public Accounts Committee.

To the first interrogatory I say:—

1. I cannot state exactly when first I heard of the criminal prosecutions in Manitoba for election frauds. I think it was in Council I first heard of them, and probably from the Premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It was soon after his government had been formed.

2. The principal information before us was that received from Sir Wilfrid. There was a letter from Mr. Sifton, then Attorney General of Manitoba, to Sir Wilfrid; but whether this letter was read to us in Council or presented in Council, I do not remember.

3. I had not previously had the matter under my control or supervision. I exercised no control or supervision after we had determined to assume the expense and gave instructions to Mr. Howell at the meeting with him in Ottawa.

4. I have a copy of a letter written by me to Mr. Sifton after the close of the prosecutions. The letter had reference to some of the charges made in some of the bills claimed by some of the counsel and solicitors. My letter was strictly private as between colleagues in the government. I understand that, the letter being of that character and containing nothing material to the present inquiry, Mr. Sifton has declined producing it; but he has informed me that he has no other objection, and, in effect, leaves it to my own discretion whether to produce the copy I kept or not. The following is a copy of the letter.—

10th May, 1897.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—I have your letter of the 8th instant, inclosing letter from Messrs. Archibald & Howell, of Winnipeg, covering bill of costs of Messrs. Richards & Bradshaw for their fees in connection with the ballot box prosecutions. Many of the fees charged seem to me, as an Ontario man, enormous, \$40 a day in most cases, \$10 an hour in some cases, &c.

Yours very truly,
O. MOWAT.

The Honourable
CLIFFORD SIFTON,
Minister of the Interior.

I do not think I have copies of any other letters on the subject written either by me or by my direction.