

Public Accounts Committee.

COMMITTEE ROOM,

28th June, 1899.

The Public Accounts Committee met, Mr. FRASER (Guysboro') in the chair.

Mr. F. H. GIBBORNE was called, sworn and examined, as follows :—

By the Solicitor General :

Q. You are employed in the Department of Justice?—A. I am.

Q. A portion of your duties is to tax the accounts, the bills that are sent in from agents of the department, for services rendered?—A. From a portion of the territory of Canada.

Q. What portion do you deal with especially?—A. The province of Quebec, at the present time.

Q. With reference to the appointment of agents of the department, do you know if there is a rule applicable to the charges they are supposed to make?—A. Well, I do not exactly follow your question. We have a basis upon which we tax these bills. As to certain class of bills, we have the tariff; as to others, there is a sort of recognized practice in the department as to the range within which the fees will be allowed.

Q. What class of business does the tariff apply to?—A. It applies to summary prosecutions.

Q. That would be revenue prosecutions?—A. That is to say, ordinary prosecutions for offences under the Inland Revenue and the Customs Acts, adulteration of food and that sort of thing.

Q. Then you have a rule which is supposed to be general with reference to the charges they make for services rendered, per diem allowance, for instance?—A. Well, the per diem allowance in certain cases varies to a certain extent.

Q. What do you mean by that?—A. I mean that where the case is a special matter, extending over a number of days, we generally try to fix the fees at \$20 a day. In special cases of great importance more has been allowed.

Q. Do you issue a circular to your agents at the time you appoint them?—A. We do.

Q. Is there a reference in that to the per diem allowance?—A. I think not.

Q. Does the tariff in the department under you allow \$20 for work done in the magistrate's court, and \$30 for work at the assizes, to your agents?—A. There is no printed tariff to that effect.

Q. Is there any rule?—A. That is the usual rule, I think, that has been followed. That's true. That is true of this case and the case that the Solicitor General now spoke of—ordinary prosecutions. But as I am explaining where a case extends over a couple of days, that would be obviously unfair to the lawyer employed; and there he is allowed a per diem allowance.

By Mr. Powell :

Q. That is for short cases. It is cheaper to allow \$20 per day and expenses for a certain number of days?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Fitzpatrick :

Q. Have you with you the account rendered by Mr. Hall for services in connection with the prosecution of the case against St. Louis, arising out of the Curran bridge transaction?—A. I think I have. Yes, I have it here.