

Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. COWAN.—Mr. Hughes has not been misunderstood. If there is any evidence let us have it, but we don't want political speeches to go down in the proceedings; they are for the House.

Mr. HUGHES.—Now, Mr. Chairman, if you will permit me—and if you say it is wrong I will not go on—

The CHAIRMAN.—I think you are all right in giving evidence but not to make comments.

Mr. HUGHES.—I will withdraw that statement, that I will substantiate later, which has caused this discussion. The point is Mr. McLaughlin swore I was animated by malice to his firm. I state here nothing of the kind animates me; I am the best of friends with Mr. McLaughlin and his partner. I give this as an answer to the charge of malice; and that he was my opponent; that I had never treated him other, and only treat him as, the political representative of the government. I have never talked about his office in the matter. Now, Mr. McLaughlin says here—and, by the way, it is a matter of mere detail in the question, on page 21 the reporters have taken an answer down wrong. He says: "Q. The agent of the government charged for more than work, for instance, Nancy McIntyre, \$40.25, and Mr. McLaughlin's bill was for \$6; his bill was \$6, he sent his bill.—A. But that is not true." Now, Mr. Chairman, that was a remark made by Mr. Cowan; it is his answer and the reporter thought it was Mr. McLaughlin's, but Mr. McLaughlin didn't answer. I stand here, Mr. Chairman, to say that Mr. McLaughlin didn't give that answer, but Mr. Cowan gave that answer.

By Mr. Cowan:

Q. Go on: "But that is not true," and he says that "I have Mrs. McIntyre's letter here and as you are raising that question here I had better read it."—A. But you admit he was paid \$5 on it. I am present here to show that Mr. McLaughlin was acting as the political agent of the government; and I don't want this taken down to injure him. I understand, under the law, he cannot solicit patronage, but here is his letter of July 11th, 1896, addressed to Mrs. Nancy McIntyre, Rosedale; the word was "Dear sir," showing it was a circular letter and "sir" changed to "madam," and Mr. McLaughlin writes to her: "*Re* flooded lands," then follows the letter in which he asks: "Are you interested at all in lands flooded by the raising of Cameron Lake? Mr. Isaac thought that you might be. If you are, I am engaged by a number of those who are interested to obtain a settlement and would be glad to look after your interests along with the others. There will be no charge unless we obtain something. Yours truly, R. J. McLaughlin." Now, Mr. McLaughlin, I wish to point out that Mr. McLaughlin has a partner and the firm is McLaughlin & McDermid, so he was not writing in the name of the firm but was writing as the political representative of the government. Now, Mr. McLaughlin, I may say Mrs. McIntyre never had spoken to me before.

Q. You say he does not tell the truth?—A. Now, Mr. Chairman, I draw your attention that at the last meeting I didn't want to get Mr. McLaughlin excited; I was very careful to treat the witness courteously last morning. Now, there is Mr. McLaughlin's letter and these people informed me they thought he was merely doing as I had done in times past when the Conservative party was in power.

Q. "These people informed him" is not evidence?—A. Informed me that he was looking after their interests in a political capacity. Now, I pass over a lot of minor matters, for instance, Mr. McLaughlin makes certain statements here: "it is absolutely untrue, made out of whole cloth. Before the election I had never spoken to anybody about damages from raising of the water"—then he qualified—"except those people who have consulted me, and as far as canvassing in connection with it is concerned, I never canvassed anybody." I made the statement he had and I substantiate that by stating that Mr. Pearne, one of the gentlemen canvassed, told me in the spring of 1896—