

authorized; but does the Solicitor General suggest that decisions of the Supreme court must be O.K.'d by the government or the Minister of Justice? The Soldier Settlement Board's conduct is subject to the approval of the minister from day to day.

Mr. DUNNING: And always was.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Always was, of course.

Mr. DUNNING: That is my point.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Who suggested anything else?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Did anyone ever suggest anything else? Certainly the board has always been subject to the minister.

Mr. DUNNING: Oh, oh.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the Minister of Railways think that he is doing himself credit by laughing foolishly?

Mr. DUNNING: Don't get angry.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Well, act like a gentleman.

Mr. DUNNING: Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the right hon. gentleman to leave personalities out of the discussion.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I will discuss the matter if the minister will let me.

Mr. DUNNING: The right hon. gentleman told me not to lose my temper. He is losing his now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It never was suggested by me in any sense that there is any difference whatever between the relationship of the board to the minister now and as it existed under my regime. I have never said anything of the kind. What I do say is that if this legislation goes through, then the minister, acting through the board, has a power which no government should ask for and which the former government never asked for in relation to the original act. And that power, I say, is this: the minister can take the whole amount of the value if necessary, or any part of it, and distribute it at will among all the returned soldiers on the land. The minister shakes his head. Well I invite him to get on his feet now and dispute the argument I am making. Here is a parcel of land bought from the board on which a man owes \$5,000: the minister has it in his power to reduce that \$5,000 to \$5, has he not?

Mr. FORKE: Would it not be better for the leader of the opposition to speak of the superintendent, keeping in mind the fact that he is appointed by the minister? The right hon. gentleman speaks as though the minister acted directly. He does not do anything directly.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Very well; he does it through a board which acts for him, this I have made clear. But that board is subject to dismissal at any time if it does not act as the minister desires. Surely then it is not too much to say that it is all in the power of the minister.

Mr. CAHAN: And the remuneration too depends on the minister.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, as under the former government.

Mr. DUNNING: Exactly.

Mr. MEIGHEN: But no former government ever had the power to distribute the funds of the treasury in this way. There was no way in which the funds of the treasury could be used by the board to the advantage of a party. The point I am making is this: When a man owes \$5,000 this legislation, if it goes through, will give the minister power to reduce that \$5,000 to \$5. Will the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Stewart) dispute that assertion? If he disputes it I will take his argument seriously. I will not take that of the Minister of Railways.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I want you to make your speech.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I knew the Minister of the Interior would not dispute it; I am quite confident the present minister does not purpose so reducing. I said so before. But I do not know that the Minister of the Interior may not become Minister of Railways, and the Minister of Railways become Minister of the Interior. The minister, I say, if the bill goes through, will have the power to reduce that \$5,000 to nothing, and absolutely without appeal on the part of anybody. That is indisputable. And that, I say, is wrong. It does not matter whether or not we concede the government to be composed of saints and nothing but saints. No government should ask such a power from parliament; parliament should not give such a power to any government. That is all I argued before. Am I going very far in this contention? Am I casting aspersions on anybody? Surely parliament should adopt certain principles in enacting legislation. We abandon every principle of restraint, in fact we abdicate the whole