

*Soldier Settlement Act*

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister says, "rot." Well, the minister perhaps knows what rot is.

Mr. DUNNING: That is it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister's language is reminiscent of the legislature from which he comes and of the methods for which his government was notorious.

Mr. DUNNING: I do not know whether it is in order for an hon. gentleman to reflect upon another parliamentary body as my right hon. friend has just done.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is equally parliamentary to the language of the minister. We are in a parliament now where the minister will have to take the medicine he seeks so feebly to give. I suggest to him that he will have to arrive at a much higher state of competency before it will be wise for him to try again.

I repeat that under this bill, if it goes through in the form anticipated in the resolution, the minister can take the funds of Canada without any restraint whatever if he is so disposed. I do not suggest now, nor did I suggest when I first spoke, that he is so disposed; but the fact is that without any restraint at all he can take those funds to the extent of the whole value of the lands, to the extent of the whole indebtedness, and divide them among the returned soldiers owing money.

Mr. CANNON: How?

Mr. MEIGHEN: By reducing each indebtedness by the full amount.

Mr. CANNON: He cannot.

Mr. MEIGHEN: He can.

Mr. CANNON: He certainly cannot.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Why can he not?

Mr. CANNON: Because there is machinery to prevent him from doing so, which machinery my right hon. friend has been discussing for ten minutes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Solicitor General has not read the resolution or he would not suggest any such thing. Whatever I might charge against the Solicitor General it would not be lack of brains. If he reads the resolution he will see that the minister never needs to invoke that arbitration machinery at all. All he has to do is to agree with the soldier to make whatever reduction he, the minister, feels disposed to make.

Mr. DUNNING: No, no. It is the board, not the minister.

[Mr. Dunning.]

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Minister of Railways (Mr. Dunning) has not read the resolution either; he has not the faintest notion of the resolution he has discussed. The board never comes into existence unless the minister and the soldier fail to agree.

Mr. DUNNING: Oh, no. My hon. friend is wrong.

An hon. MEMBER: It is the settlement board.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister acts through his agent, the settlement board.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The settlement board is the representative and agent of the minister.

Mr. DUNNING: As it was under my right hon. friend.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Certainly. Let the minister try to hold his temper for a little while and keep his seat. This signalling of followers hardly becomes the House of Commons. I thought the minister when he mentioned "board" referred to the board of arbitration.

Mr. DUNNING: No, no.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I see now that he referred to the settlement board. But the settlement board in acting acts under the direction of and subject to the imprimatur of the minister. That always has been the case and is the case to-day.

Mr. DUNNING: Under your regime too.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Certainly.

Mr. DUNNING: And that is my point.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Certainly it was the same under my regime.

Mr. CANNON: Would the right hon. gentleman claim seriously as a lawyer of any standing that the Supreme court is the Minister of Justice?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Not at all. The Solicitor General is making a ridiculous suggestion.

Mr. CANNON: It is no more ridiculous than my right hon. friend's suggestion.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the Solicitor General suggest that the Soldier Settlement Board bears to the minister the same relation as the Supreme Court of Canada bears to the government, or the Minister of Justice? The suggestion is ridiculous. The Soldier Settlement Board's conduct is O.K.'d. by the minister from day to day, and nothing of importance it does becomes effective until it is so