

not. That is the roundabout method the minister has adopted. Suppose that any other of the laws of this country were attempted to be enforced in that way! Would not every one think it ridiculous? If a man were guilty of smuggling, for instance, and some person had to complain to the municipal council in the first place, and then six months afterwards the council investigate and send on the papers to the Minister of Labour; the Minister of Labour investigates, and turns the case over to the Attorney General of the province in which the offence was committed. Would not every body laugh if such a method were adopted in this Dominion in regard to smuggling? And is the high cost of living any less important to the people of this Dominion than the law relating to smuggling? I cannot help thinking—it strikes me most forcibly—that the Minister of Labour is not sincere. If he had been he would never have adopted such a roundabout method of prosecuting. I should like him to explain to the House why he did not pass a regulation empowering himself to take proceedings against an offender, instead of having the matter dealt with in such a roundabout way.

Mr. CROTHERS: It is clear that the hon. member for Guysborough has not read this Order in Council. There is no necessity for such a circuitous method as he has described. The municipality, or the member for Guysborough himself, may, with the consent of the Attorney general of the province, prosecute any body without any reference to the Minister of Labour whatever, and the fact that he can do that, taken in conjunction with the speech we have just heard, shows that the hon. member for Guysborough has not read the Order in Council at all. I must also send him a copy to-morrow.

Mr. MACDONALD: What was the trouble that my hon. friend the Mayor of Montreal had in regard to prosecutions?

Mr. CROTHERS: The Mayor of Montreal is quite able to speak for himself.

Mr. MEDERIC MARTIN: Of course he is. I hope my hon. friend will not mind my speaking in French.

(Continuing in French) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, the newspapers reported yesterday an interview given lately by the honourable the Minister of Labour, stating that the Mayor of the city of Montreal had

[Mr. Sinclair.]

not done his duty by the citizens of that city.

The increase in the cost of living is not a question of recent date; yet the minister has been pleased to do what he has always done since he has the honour of sitting on the Treasury benches: he springs up at the last minute and tries to get the people of this country to believe that he is ever intent on securing their welfare. But we know otherwise, as I shall endeavour to prove.

First the coal question. Some time last March, I received a telegram from the minister, about eleven o'clock at night, and the next day I got in touch with the Board of Control to have an investigation made into the causes of the increase in the price of that commodity. The next day, I gave instructions to the superintendent of Municipal Charities to go around—the coalyards in the city and secure prices. It was found that the abnormal rise in the price of coal was not due to the retailers, but was a result of the importers or wholesale dealers, refusing to supply the retailers unless the latter agreed to let them fix the price beforehand.

Regarding the high cost of living, the matter had been foreseen by us last fall. The Montreal Board of Control and Council had passed resolutions requesting the Government to lay an embargo on some necessities of life, and it should have been done for instance on potatoes, wheat, flour and some other farm produce, as was just now pointed out by the hon. member for St. John, N. B. (Mr. Pugsley). We were of opinion that the transport and sale of commodities should be under the control of the Government, who would see that enough remained in the country to feed the population. In this case as in all others, the Government has pursued its usual policy of inaction, with a view to getting votes, especially the farmers' votes, at the next elections. But our farmers are wise enough to understand that present prices for farm products are abnormal. I say further that the greater part of such abnormal increase in the price of commodities does not go to the farmer, but to the monopolists and speculators. This year had the Government been in earnest, a commission would have been appointed by the Minister of Labour in all the large centres, to inquire into the quantities of produce held in the cold storage plants, such as poultry, mutton—I know that some has been stored up for as long as 36 months,—beef, butter and cheese. The quantities of wheat and flour