

Mr. MEIGHEN: I presume the same clause would be found there.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No; that is just the whole point.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There was further power.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No, there was not.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Well, the War Appropriation Act was in full force, as the hon. gentleman knows, and we also have the Estimates there. It certainly could be done under the authority of the War Appropriation Act, and I would be rather surprised if there was not a vote similar to the one I have quoted in the Estimates of the year before.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Was there any agreement between the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and the Dominion in regard to employment offices in those provinces?

Mr. MEIGHEN: As to their establishment?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I am not informed of any.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I think my hon. friend will find there was none. But section 6 of the Act provides:

The payments hereinbefore authorized shall as to each province be conditional upon an agreement between the minister and the government of the province as to the terms, conditions and purposes within the meaning of this Act upon and for which the payments are to be made and applied, and upon such agreement being approved by the Governor in Council.

The point I am making is—there was no agreement between those provinces and the Dominion. This money could only be paid conditional upon that agreement existing, and since there was no such agreement the Governor in Council have used the moneys in an unauthorized way.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member is leader of the Opposition. No money was paid to the provinces because no agreement was made.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is aside from the point altogether. Money was paid out, and it could only be paid out conditional on an agreement between the provinces and the Dominion.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The money could not be paid to the provinces except under this Act; but it could be paid for the establishment

of offices directly under the minister, either under the War Appropriation Act in respect to the second clause, or under the Estimates, or under the powers establishing the Department of Labour. I have the Estimates here, but I have not yet got this matter traced for the year before. Certainly the Estimate for this year is very specific, and if the Estimate for the year before is the same, then there would be three authorities under which this could have been done. Whether the Estimate is specific or not, there are two authorities at least.

An hon. MEMBER: Carried.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No. I will not discuss that matter further. The clauses of the Act are plain, and any person who wishes to follow the matter up can do so and reach, I think, an accurate conclusion from what appears on Hansard.

In regard to the proposed amendment, it is suggested that the employment office, instead of being, as originally, an employment office operated by any Provincial Government, "shall be an employment office or any division of an employment office, operated by any Provincial Government, or any other employment office or division of an employment office approved by the minister." I think that is altogether too wide a power to give to the minister. There are all kinds of employment offices—offices connected with railway companies and steamship companies, and offices conducted by employment agencies for a thousand and one different purposes. The power which will be given to the minister under this clause would simply permit him to use public funds for a variety of purposes that possibly Parliament would not approve of. So long as the Act related to employment offices conducted by a province there would be some guarantee as to the standing of the office, but I certainly think this amendment goes too far. I hope the minister will agree with me that it would be a wise precaution—I do not want to deprive the minister of an opportunity of encouraging legitimate expansion—but it would be a wise precaution to make it subject to approval by the Governor in Council rather than leave the matter solely in the hands of the minister. Pressure may be brought to bear on the minister to assist various small offices here and there, and probably the minister himself would find it a wise precaution to have the section amended as I suggest.