

Mr. YOUNG (Saskatoon): Before the hon. gentleman speaks, may I ask the hon. member for Rosetown (Mr. Evans) for an answer to my question?

Mr. GARDINER: In view of the statute, which His Honour the Speaker has just read, may I ask why it is necessary for this item of \$424.59 to appear in the supplementary estimates as salary to Mr. Meighen as leader of the official opposition?

Mr. SPEAKER: This item, as I understand it, was submitted to the Minister of Finance and not to myself. I know that after the election there was some little talk about the balance of salary due to Mr. Meighen. No application was made by Mr. Meighen but it was reported that I should give orders that he be paid as leader of the opposition from the date of his resignation as Prime Minister. Therefore he was paid from the day of his resignation as Prime Minister up to the day of the swearing in of the new minister. The new leader of the opposition was selected in the month of November, I think.

Mr. CAHAN: On October 11th.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well, October 11th. I was ready to pay the right hon. gentleman, but Colonel Cameron, who is accountant of the House of Commons, pointed out to me first of all that no application had been received from Mr. Meighen. In the next place he referred me to the statute which I have just quoted. I was familiar with it, of course, because I was in the House when the act was passed. Under that statute the allowance is only paid to the member occupying the recognized position of leader of the opposition in the House of Commons. The main estimates provide for what I could not legally pay. What is provided for here is the balance which is claimed from the day Mr. Meighen resigned as Prime Minister until the day when the hon. gentleman who now occupies the position of leader of the opposition was elected by his party. It is a very small amount. The request was made, I understand, to the Minister of Finance, and this amount was placed, and properly placed, where it is in the estimates. That is all I know about the matter.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Did I understand you to say, Mr. Speaker, that the right hon. gentleman had made application for this money?

Mr. SPEAKER: He never made any application to me.

[Mr. Gardiner.]

Mr. ROBB: I think it is fair to the Right Hon. Mr. Meighen to say that when the Prime Minister learned in October that he had not been paid for a period while he was leader of the opposition, provision was made to pay him, and a cheque was sent to Mr. Meighen. Then on the 2nd April last, Mr. Meighen wrote directing attention to the fact that he had not been paid for that period from the date of the election until October 11th. We calculated the period from September 26th to October 11th, when my hon. friend (Mr. Guthrie) was made leader, and an amount of \$434.59 was put in the estimates to clean the matter up.

Mr. BROWN: Is it in accordance with the statute that a man who was not a member of the House of Commons should be paid as leader of the opposition?

Mr. ROBB: I have not gone into that phase of the matter.

Mr. GARDINER: Is it to be understood that this is in the nature of a compassionate allowance? Surely that is not the position we are going to place the late Prime Minister of this country in.

Mr. ROBB: I should like to make it clear that the government is not putting Mr. Meighen in that position. It was Mr. Meighen who directed our attention to the fact that he was entitled to that amount of money, and we are submitting the item to the House.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Perhaps I should say that this is another case, in which I think the Commons itself will have to assert its own right and authority. After the general elections when Mr. Meighen retired from office though still continuing in the position of leader of the opposition I was informed by an hon. member of this House that Mr. Meighen had been refused the use of a frank, that he had been told that his secretaries could not receive any payment, and that his own salary as leader of the opposition had been cut off. It was represented to me that in Mr. Meighen's mind I was responsible for that very summary procedure. I confess I was very surprised when I discovered that Mr. Meighen had been treated in this manner and I communicated with His Honour the Speaker requesting that Mr. Meighen should be given the rights and privileges to which I thought he was entitled. I received word from His Honour the Speaker that Mr. Meighen could not legally be paid any amount on account of the statute governing the situation. I recognized that the