

The whole Act relates to employment offices operated by Provincial Governments. The whole purpose of the Act, when it was passed, was to co-operate with Provincial Governments, and if the minister will take the trouble to read the debates that took place in Parliament at the time he will see that the ground on which the money was appropriated was that it was to be in co-operation with the provinces. Not one word was said as to assisting employment offices in different municipalities. If the minister's present interpretation is correct, why does he come to Parliament at the present time and ask for any amendment to the Act? What is the amendment for which he is asking? He is asking that we change the definition of "employment office" so that it shall mean, "employment office operated by any Provincial Government or any other employment office approved by the minister." What he is doing at the present time is asking Parliament to give power to do the thing that the Governor in Council has taken upon itself to do without the authority of Parliament. The only justification he has for the amendment is to be found in the circumstance that the law as originally drafted did not give the Governor in Council power to do what it has been doing with public funds.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I am so accustomed to being scolded by the leader of the Opposition that it really has very little effect on me now. I will make one more effort to render this clear to him; if I fail it will be on account of my limited powers of expression.

The present Bill is to enable the Governor in Council to pay moneys to municipalities; he could not do so under the old Act. I hope that is clear. Unless this Bill passes, the Governor in Council cannot use a municipality as formerly under the old Act he could use a province. Under the sections commencing with section 4 the minister could pay to a province half the cost of maintenance of employment offices maintained in the province; he could not pay that half to a municipality. Now then, it is clear that to attain the end desired there must be an amendment. But the leader of the Opposition said: "You went in before this amendment was passed and you paid moneys to municipalities." That I contradicted; I said we paid no moneys to any municipalities. Why does he say we did? The Order in Council—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: You paid money for employment offices that were

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conducted by municipalities, not by the provincial authorities.

Mr. MEIGHEN: No. The Minister of Labour conducted them at the expense of the department. He was not allowed to do so unless the municipality supplied the office space and equipment. How would any money go to the municipality? Does the hon. member say that cheques were issued to the municipality? Employment offices were supported directly from the funds of the department. But I argue that it could be done under section 3, for the department there has power to aid and encourage organization. At all events whether that is so or not, the wording it seems to me is wide enough to cover it, and I apprehend that the minister, under the original Act constituting his department, has the power to establish employment offices and maintain them. I have not sent for the Act. But in any event he is acting here under Clause 3. The employment office that he maintains would necessarily from the context be his own employment office. In section 4 the wording is:

Employment office maintained by the province to the support of which he contributes by issuing cheques to the province.

But he never issued cheques to the municipality; he maintained the office. He did not commence to maintain it unless the municipalities supplied the space and the equipment.

I have just had drawn to my attention the Appropriation Act of last year, and in the appropriation to the Department of Labour of \$367,500 the following item, No. 243, appears:

To supplement amount provided by statute 8 and 9, George V, Chapter 21, including \$50,000 for the establishment and maintenance of employment offices in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the said Act.

In addition to the powers under the War Measures Act and under the War Appropriation Act, here is definite authority.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What date is that?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Last year's Estimates.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Expiring on the 31st March, 1920?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am speaking about the Return laid on the table for the year ending March 31, 1919.