

board had endeavoured to do what was right, and the Minister of Finance repeated, at that time, that he had made a suggestion that the Gillen Board was the proper one. That was followed by a proclamation of the minister to the press—because he keeps very close to the press, whatever faults he may have—to the effect that they could not move until McLachlan came down and receded from his position. Consequently the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) having taken the one stand, accepting the suggestion of the leader of the Progressive party (Mr. Crerar), in which I had no part at all, and as respects which I did not even make a statement, and the Minister of Labour having made a statement to the press of the country wholly contradictory of his colleague's view, I asked in the House, the next day, what was to be done. I called attention to both statements and inquired whether the board was to be reconvened, or whether the policy of the Minister of Labour, as stated in the press, was to be carried out. I was promptly and distinctly informed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) that the Gillen Board was to be reconvened, and that steps had already been taken—I think I am giving the words of the hon. member, or, at least, their effect—to get in communication with the members of the board; whereupon, having in mind the proclamation of the minister that nothing would be done until there was a repudiation of the stand taken by Mr. McLachlan and his men. I asked whether this reconvening was to be unconditional and irrespective of the conduct of Mr. McLachlan.

Mr. MURDOCK: Does my hon. friend think that the Minister of Labour acted in disregard of the rights of all the people of Canada when he took the position that no consideration should be given to a man or men who promulgated and sought to carry out any such thing as they were talking about, such as "loafing on the job?" Does he think that the Minister of Labour improperly took that position? My hon. friend appears to justify the conduct, the attitude, and the claims of McLachlan on April 3rd, and I want to know whether or not I misunderstand him in this respect.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Let me assure the minister that he will not misunderstand me to-night; but I will assure him, first of all, that he will not switch me from the point, until I am through, no matter how he struggles to do so. I will finish that first.

Mr. MURDOCK: And you will give me an answer to that question.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I have given the answer already, but I have no objection to repeating it. The point is this: having pointed out this conflict of statements with the Government, I asked the Prime Minister whether the board was to be reconvened as intimated by the Minister of Finance two or three days before, and the Prime Minister gave a clear and unequivocal answer. To make sure that there was to be nothing conditional about it, I inquired whether this reconvening was to be conditional or unconditional, and was told that it was to be unconditional. Now, what is to be thought of a minister of the Crown, in the face of these facts, coming to Parliament to-night and asserting that I am the father of the reconvening of the board, and that, because I inquired whether it was to be done unconditionally, therefore, all the delay connected with the reconvening is attributable to me? Is that the only sense of reason the minister has? Is that the best he can do?

Mr. MURDOCK: A mere knowledge of the facts is all I have.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister's knowledge of the facts may be all right, but in his expression of them he is all wrong.

Mr. MURDOCK: I am willing to let the people of Canada judge who is to blame for the delay.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We are now before the members of this House. Now what the minister asks to-night is another question altogether, a question debated in this House some weeks ago on the motion of the member for Calgary (Mr. Irvine). My judgment on that is exactly as expressed then. I did not feel that the conduct of McLachlan was such that it could in any way be made an excuse for the Department of Labour to cease functioning. That is the opinion I expressed then and to which I adhere now; and that seemed to be the opinion of the Government, however different it may have been from the opinion of the Minister of Labour.

Mr. MANION: The publication, the printing, binding and distribution of the Labour Gazette comes under this item. I have heard the opinion expressed in the past by labour men that the table which is given in the Labour Gazette on the cost of living is absolutely unreliable. The minister has no doubt seen this table many times. Does he think it is a reliable guide as to the cost of living?