

was only wasting time in this dispute in endeavouring to reconvene the old board. However, I had not studied the act particularly, and I assumed the Prime Minister, who had charge of the matter, and who, I had understood framed the act, knew its terms, and that when he accepted the suggestion of the leader of the Progressive party that the old board be reconvened, he was accepting something that was practical and that would lead somewhere. But on subsequent inquiry I find the impression I was under was absolutely and plainly correct, and that there could be no possible misinterpretation of the matter at all. I must say that, under the circumstances, and a very clear reading of the statute, I do not know why the Government ever set to work to attempt to reconvene the old board, to go back into the old dispute, because, manifestly, the old board had no power in the world to go back in to that dispute. The old board had completed its functions when it made its report, and it could only be reconvened for the purpose of interpreting that report under section 22A of the act. It could not be reconvened and re-assume any of the powers at all that it formerly exercised. All it could do would be to go down and give the support of either side without any powers at all. Consequently, when the old board was presumably reconvened, time was being wasted, and when the members resigned they were resigning offices they did not hold. They had nothing to resign. The offices they had held terminated sometime before, with the handing in of their report. So that there was nothing but time wasted in connection with the reconvening of the old board.

Of course, the minister under the provisions of section 63A, which he has just referred to, and properly referred to, could properly appoint a new board. He could, by going through the regular process, or rather he could not, but the parties to the dispute, could, if they so chose, have taken the former members. But they were the men to make the choice; under the act, the Government could not make the choice at all. If the Government was operating under the act, the Government had to leave it to the parties to name their representatives. All the rest of the procedure was just so much, I will not say intentional, but just so much waste time, and I could not help thinking that the minister himself has been of that impression all along. With, however, that time gone, simply through inappreciation of the

law owing to hasty action on the part of members of the Government, we are now apparently at the stage where the law is being complied with, where, under section 63-A, the minister is taking steps to have a new board established. That is all right. I do not know whether that is the best method or not; the minister ought to be in a position to know that a great deal better than I. There may be some advantage in having a royal commission under the Inquiries Act, and I am quite prepared to accept his judgment that this is the best step to take. I am glad to see something done to bring about better conditions and to have the Labour Department function as it is intended to function in disputes of this kind. Let me, however, express the hope that, when the board is appointed, it goes to the ground and learns all the facts; that the minister sees, to the best of his ability, that it goes there, and also that, hereafter, when we have declarations of labour policy from the Minister of Labour, we shall be able to understand that they are declarations of government policy. I presume, however, that all are concurring with the minister this time in the appointment of a new board under section 63-A, and that this is not a step which he is taking, only to be repudiated by his colleagues later on.

Mr. MURDOCK: I am, indeed, gratified to hear this evening the statement from my right hon. friend. I was personally convinced, on the third day of April, when he rose from his seat in this House and undertook to insist that, unconditionally, the Gillen Board be reconvened, he knew full well or believed that it would be inconsistent with the provision and intent of the act, under all the circumstances, to reconvene that board, and that the board, when it was convened, would have no effect or authority in law. I felt, at that time, that my right hon. friend—and I am not criticising in this—was endeavouring to assist in delaying the game for the purpose, possibly, of casting some reflection upon the Minister of Labour or the Labour Department or, possibly, upon some of the present colleagues or associates of the Minister of Labour in the present Government.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Before the minister proceeds further in reference to my statement, will he read my words where I insisted that the Gillen Board be reconvened? I certainly intended to insist that what was