

under this item, in the Nova Scotia coal situation.

Hon. JAMES MURDOCK (Minister of Labour): This particular vote has nothing to do with the Nova Scotia coal situation.

Mr. STEVENS: I do not think the minister is treating the House with courtesy when he makes that statement. I am not seeking to pester him with things that do not come under the item, but as I read this item it is:

Conciliation and Labour Act, including publication, printing, binding and distribution of Labour Gazette and allowance to correspondents, \$50,000.

Surely, under the duties of the department and the administration of the Conciliation and Labour Act, I would be justified in asking a very ordinary question, and I think the House has been very tolerant with my hon. friend in refraining long ago from inquiring as to what progress has been made in the settlement of the strike. If the minister refuses to answer, then we are to rely upon press reports, and when he refuses to answer my very simple question, I think I am justified in making a few speculations. It would appear from items in the press that very satisfactory progress has not been made. I think the minister should take this opportunity to tell the House just what progress he has made. Certainly I am amazed at his bald, blank, and scarcely courteous refusal to give the information.

Mr. MURDOCK: I am very sorry, indeed, Mr. Chairman, if my hon. friend from Centre Vancouver (Mr. Stevens) understood me as being discourteous in suggesting to him that the next item that we will have to discuss is the one which has to do with the expense connected with handling the mining difficulties in Nova Scotia. There was no intention of being discourteous. I now understand that the hon. gentleman would like some information as to the status of the situation in Nova Scotia, which we discussed in this House some weeks ago, and, of course, I will be very glad to give such information as I have at hand in regard to that matter. As hon. gentlemen have seen from press reports, an effort was made to reconvene the Gillen Board. As a matter of fact, the Gillen Board was reconvened, and, shortly after reconvening in Halifax, two members of the board, in substance and in effect, wired their resignation to me, indicating that they had no authority, as a reconvened board, to deal

[Mr. Stevens.]

with the question that had been indicated in this House they should properly and effectively deal with. The resignation of the two members of the board, namely the chairman and the representative of the employees, was promptly accepted by the minister, and later I received from the former representative of the company on that board a letter which, in substance, indicated that he was heartily in accord with the belief of his colleagues that the reconvened board could not, under any intent of the law, deal again with the situation that they had undertaken to deal with in January last. The result was that we undertook, of course, in carrying out the evident desire of this House, to at once institute a new board of investigation under 63A of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, as amended in 1918, and that board is now in course of formation. A week ago last Wednesday the miners' representative appointed a member to that board to represent the employees. The companies have not yet appointed their representative. They asked for some delay, sufficient to compensate or make allowance for the holiday, which was given them. That time expires to-night, when, if an appointment has not been made by the companies, it will be the duty of the minister to appoint a representative for the companies. Then it will be necessary for another five days to elapse, in which we hope that the two members appointed will agree on the choice of a chairman. If they fail to do so, it will again devolve upon the minister to choose a chairman for the board, so that we hope to have a newly established board functioning in regard to the mining dispute of Nova Scotia within the next ten days.

Mr. STEVENS: What is the condition of the dispute now?

Mr. MURDOCK: The condition, as I understand it, is that coal mining is going on under fairly satisfactory conditions. The strike-on-the-job, in so far as it was ever effective, has been, as I understand, distinctly and entirely abandoned, full work is being given ungrudgingly, and the actual coal mining situation is better than it was when we discussed the matter in the House on the 30th March last. Of course, I judge that is because the men believe that, as soon as possible, there will be another board functioning and investigating entirely the situation on their behalf.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I was very strongly under the impression that the Government