

Supply—Labour—Relief

what amount will be allocated towards those new projects? If nothing is to be done, it seems to me there remains approximately only \$150,000 to complete the grants of last year. Will all that money be allocated to British Columbia, or if not, how much will be made available out of this grant?

Mr. ROGERS: There is an amount of \$5,500,000 for new projects. It will have to be divided among the various provinces upon a basis of joint contribution for new works. The precise means by which that allocation will be made can hardly be stated at this time. We are very anxious to avoid too great a concentration of dominion contributions in one province as against another. Other departments of government contemplate expenditures during the coming year dealing with one aspect or another of relief, so that in making our allocations for the various provinces we shall try to keep it in view that there should be an equitable distribution having regard to the needs of the situation. That will depend also upon our further negotiations with the provincial governments.

Mr. ESLING: Mr. Chairman, with \$150,000 remaining from last year's grant, and with innumerable people along the line of the highway from Banff into West Kootenay and over the summit to the coast, does it not mean that somebody was derelict in not carrying on these operations and continuing these projects, and does British Columbia practically not forfeit the expenditure of that \$150,000 on these highways simply because it did not expend the money when so many men were waiting for work and urging that they be employed?

Mr. ROGERS: I sought a moment ago to point out that the total of \$595,275.57, being payments made to British Columbia to date, included disbursements on accounts received up to March 31, 1937 and the total of accounts being examined and for which payment is asked by April 30 of this year. That does not mean that further accounts may not be receivable for work already done. But where the work has not been completed it has been the practice to revoke an amount sufficient for that purpose. I would also point out that weather conditions in the winter will often prevent the completion of a particular project, so that failure of a province to get in its accounts for the entire amount payable by the dominion government does not suggest any laxity of administration.

Mr. ESLING: Following the department's practice of last year, is it to be understood that the federal members from British Col-

[Mr. Esling.]

umbia will not be informed as to any projects or any expenditure of public money under this relief vote until this house again assembles next year?

Mr. ROGERS: I have been accustomed to receive proposals for projects from hon. members from all the provinces, and so far as possible consideration is given to those proposals as received. It must be remembered, however, that what we have here is the joint works program. It is necessary that the two governments concerned shall agree; therefore we are to some extent in the hands of the provincial governments which submit to us their highway programs. I am sure the hon. member will understand that there is much to be said in support of that view where expenditures are made on highways. The dominion government has not the knowledge necessary to decide where a particular highway should be placed; the construction of highways has always been a matter under provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. ESLING: I fear the minister has not understood my question. I asked, if the government allocates money to British Columbia for expenditure during the present fiscal year, and an hon. member for British Columbia writes to the Department of Labour and asks what expenditures are being or are to be made, must that member wait until the next session of parliament to be informed? Because that was precisely the situation last year.

Mr. ROGERS: I am sorry that I did not understand the hon. member's question. I see no reason why, once the agreement with the province has been signed, it could not be made available to any member of the house who writes in to request the information. That would be my view of it, and I can see no reason why the other party to the agreement would have any objection.

Mr. ESLING: It was from the minister himself I received the reply that these agreements with the province of British Columbia were confidential and could not be disclosed to hon. members until they were laid on the table of the house, this session.

Mr. ROGERS: I doubt if I used just those words, but if I did I am glad to make the correction now.

Mr. CHURCH: May I ask the minister what proportion of the \$7,000,000 is a revote from last year? How large is the old revote, and how much is the new vote this year?

Mr. ROGERS: The revote for the continuation of works is \$514,269.04. The revote for