

Inquiries of the Ministry

act, which will help municipalities in meeting the obligation to pay relief to unemployed persons?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, just as soon as we get on with the disposition of those things which are on the order paper now.

[Later:]

Mr. Brown (Essex West): May I ask a question of the Prime Minister which is supplementary to a question I asked him earlier. Would he now care to answer the second part of that question, and tell us whether any advances have been made to the province of Ontario to encourage them to avail themselves of the provisions of the Unemployment Assistance Act, so the municipalities may be assisted in preparing their budgets in taking care of the relief of unemployed persons?

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might contribute something in the way of an answer to the hon. member. The Prime Minister announced some days ago that the legislation to remove the so-called threshold from the Unemployment Assistance Act would be introduced at this session and that the legislation would become effective from January 1, 1958. It was discussed at the recent dominion-provincial conference, when a proposal was put forward on behalf of this government and was accepted with approval by all the provinces, including the province of Ontario. Obviously, no advances may be made until parliament authorizes them, unless they conform to the present terms of the act, with the threshold provisions still in effect.

IRRIGATION**SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER—COVERAGE OF CONSTRUCTION START BY FILM BOARD**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. James Sinclair (Coast-Capilano): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Acting Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who is responsible for the national film board, which has done a very fine job in recording for posterity great occasions in our country's history. Would he report to the house on the action taken by the national film board yesterday in recording another historic occasion, the start of construction of the South Saskatchewan dam, which the Prime Minister promised would be under way six months from the election? That six months expired yesterday, December 10.

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Acting Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am not able to answer the question in a

form which would be satisfactory to the hon. gentleman, but I can assure him that in accordance with the habit of the government of making good on its pledges the national film board will be able to record the commencement of construction under this government.

Mr. Sinclair: The pledge was for yesterday.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think there is another answer in that connection. It is that type of frivolous question that has used up 32 hours and 37 minutes so far this session.

Mr. Sinclair: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, I want to assert that members on this side do not regard questions on the South Saskatchewan dam as frivolous, nor did we regard the promises of the Prime Minister last spring as frivolous, frivolous though they have turned out to be now.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I rise on a point of order. As I said a moment ago with regard to another question, I am sure all hon. members have great confidence in the way in which Your Honour has presided over our deliberations. What I am going to say now is in no way a reflection on the Speaker of the house, but I do suggest that the observation just made by the Prime Minister, the kind of observation which he has made repeatedly throughout this session, is wholly out of order. It is not up to any member of the house, including the Prime Minister, to lecture the House of Commons.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I was not lecturing—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Robichaud: Respect of parliament.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I was—

Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf): Being natural.

Mr. Diefenbaker:—simply pointing out the fact that day by day, and I have the list here, my hon. friends have been cluttering the record with nonsensical questions facetiously asked for a purpose other than the purposes of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Chevrier: It is not up to you to judge them.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am simply pointing out that fact. My hon. friends ask when we are going to do this and that. An average of almost one hour a day, Mr. Speaker, has been taken on questions that should not have