

Time Allocation

apply to the next fiscal year, but this is not a new procedure and the interim amount granted will be deducted from the amount to be set out for 1983-1984 financial requirements in a subsequent Bill.

In their frantic and frequent efforts of late to thwart the smooth operation of Parliament while they attempt to get their own act together, Members of the Official Opposition have added insult to the financial injury they are causing the Canadian people by stalling this and other legislation before this House. They have so little respect for the intelligence of Canadians that they would have us believe they are dragging their feet on this matter and others because they do not have sufficient information. I would draw their attention to the 6,000 pages of Main estimates material tabled two weeks ago today by my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray), as ample indication of how the money will be spent.

To refresh their memories, I would point out that in tabling the Main Estimates the President of the Treasury Board indicated that almost two-thirds of these budgetary Estimates are slated for statutory expenditures based on continuing authority given by Acts of the current or previous Parliaments which determine the basis whereby individuals, businesses, provincial and other Governments become entitled to receive federal funds.

The Main Estimates show in great detail the wide variety of programs being carried on by this Government living up to its responsibilities of assisting Canadians who have been buffeted, as we all know, by the worst recession we have experienced in this country in some years.

They reflect a 21 per cent rise in cash payments under the Established Programs Financing Act whereby the federal Government contributes to the financing of hospital insurance, medicare, extended health care and post-secondary education. They indicate a \$2.9 billion allocation to Unemployment Insurance as we anticipate a slow recovery in employment prospects during our gradual recovery from the recession. These funds are committed to assist in that area.

● (1510)

The Estimates show a 21 per cent increase in federal contributions to the Provinces, for example, under the Canada Assistance Plan. The federal Government pays for 50 per cent of eligible provincial and municipal expenditures for assistance payments, welfare services and certain health programs. We also cover one-half of the costs of child support services such as foster care, daycare and a broad array of other family and social support services.

If Members opposite are still in doubt as to how the money will be spent, I would mention that the Main Estimates also spell out a number of new initiatives undertaken by the Government, including the Small Business Investment Grant Program, the New Employment Expansion Development Program or the NEED Program.

I find the allegation that Parliament is being kept in the dark as to the disposition of the funding under consideration particularly ironic because I, as Minister responsible for finance in areas such as the Insurance Department, have been requested by the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs to answer questions on Estimates dealing with those expenditures. Other Members of the Government have been requested to substantiate the expenditures listed in the Estimates which the President of the Treasury Board has already tabled in the House.

I find it ironic and not really worth arguing with Hon. Members opposite when they say they do not have enough information to gauge what the expenditures are for. Will they not attend any of these committee meetings? Are they not going to ask questions of Ministers? I cannot believe that.

Without this interim authorization, the borrowing activities of the Government would be constrained in the early months of the new fiscal year, which is a period when all Members appreciate the Government usually faces heavy cash requirements stemming from the payment of tax refunds and from other seasonal factors.

The point that we urge upon all Members, if we have to repeat it, is that if borrowing powers are limited during that period, the Government would be precluded from prudent planning of its debt program and would not be able to take advantage of developing market situations. This could be costly not only to the Government, but could impact upon provincial Governments in their borrowing activities in the market and upon the private sector in its participation as well in the capital market. As I said, it behooves the Government and Parliament to proceed in an orderly way with the legislation before it because it comes down to the issue of good financial housekeeping.

Bill C-143 is but one of a series of measures being undertaken by the Government to provide the financial setting for the development of a national strategy for economic recovery.

There were a number of questions asked about Bill C-139 during Question Period today. That is another Bill which Hon. Members, at times, had requested the Government to proceed with quickly in order to bring about some economic stability and stability to the private sector so it would have an idea of how to plan for the future. It is in the context of bringing that improved stability to the private sector that Bill C-143 is part and parcel of the Government's program. We are reviewing priorities. We are preparing a budget and we are reviewing these matters in an attempt to proceed without adding to the deficit.

In the circumstances, proposals for future Government action involving either increased spending or revenue reduction will have to compete with a wide range of other needs as expressed to us by Canadians generally. We have made it clear that we are seeking areas where we can act in close co-operation with business and labour in order to strengthen the financial health of the private sector and its ability to expand and prosper. We have indicated that this legislation will assist the Government to deal with the market in an orderly manner.