

Hopefully occupying managerial positions, it is reasonable to assume that respective members of "Dam Busters" would quickly assess weaknesses within their areas of expertise. Reacting instinctively to challenge, I believe corrective planning would be fast and effective. Equipped with positive planning, supported by federal funds, and stimulated by competitive complementary interaction from their peers in support activities, revitalization is inevitable. Dams will be broken and the flow of viable production will be firmly established.

This report, as near as I can figure out, proposes to make a General Motors out of the Atlantic housing industry. If this is the type of policy input that we are going to be fed as far as the federal government's current DREE program for decentralization is concerned, then I think we in the Atlantic region are in for more trouble than we realize.

• (2010)

However, coming back to the guidelines, if any, in respect of this \$350 million expenditure under vote L12a, I wonder if we are not justified in asking for a little more explanation about the benefits that will accrue to the people most affected by an expenditure of this kind. Are there going to be any lasting benefits? Will there be municipal and civic improvements? Will there be wharves, roads, and so on, constructed? I hope so. However, I am afraid what we will have is just another LIP program.

Surely winter works capital programs deserve more careful regulation and policy guidelines than the somewhat impromptu method used by the department in determining who should receive LIP grants. Unfortunately, very often the people who receive these grants are those who have the biggest "lip". Down in Nova Scotia we know where most of the LIP grants go, as does the government House leader. I hope that the \$14 million of this \$350 million, which is the proportion coming to Nova Scotia, will be spread around a little more. It seems obvious that we need, when considering proper guidelines and the scope for large-scale capital works projects such as these, government-planned, integrated projects. All federal department projects and not just winter works projects necessarily, well intentioned as they may be, should be integrated.

It is incomprehensible to me that the item we are considering has to be dealt with in this particular way as a mere designation namely, vote L12a. I think we are entitled to something better than that. We as Members of Parliament are entitled to participate in establishing some of the guidelines and objectives.

As I said earlier, I agree with the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) that the provinces should not be given all the responsibility of deciding how this money should be spent. Our federal prerogative, in this particular instance, is neglected. I can only deplore that and suggest that any government which proposes to spend this kind of money should listen to the suggestions of members in this House. If this government has demonstrated nothing else, it has demonstrated a great propensity for misspending money in many fields, including export development. It has demonstrated its ability to allow the UIC fund to get completely out of control. Unless some guidelines are established with the assistance of members of this House, I fear that the winter works program will be

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no better managed than some of these other programs, and later on we will be looking at the results of the expenditure of this \$350 million as we have looked at the results of other programs wondering why so many went wrong.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the objective of the motion under consideration is to make credits totalling \$350 million for a three-year period available to the provinces, provincial agencies, cities and municipalities so as to help them to undertake winter works and at the same time to fight unemployment.

Firstly, \$350 million divided over the three-year period involved, represent about \$116 million per year. In my opinion, \$116 million per year is a drop of water in the ocean, all the more so if the needs of the cities, municipalities and provincial agencies throughout the country are taken into consideration.

As a comparison, I would mention that the budget of the Olympic Games alone amounts to \$350 million, for an event which will last about three weeks. The Olympic Games budget is as high as the grants we are asked to vote for three years to help the municipalities, the school boards and the provincial governments and agencies to fight unemployment.

Some Liberals think that such a small amount will perform economic miracles in Canada. I repeat that this is a drop of water in the ocean. Moreover, until now on the basis of government statements, we have no indication that the provinces will not keep this money for themselves to meet their needs and, for example, to finance the construction of hydro facilities, roads and other projects. Will the provinces be able to keep that money for their own purposes only, or will they have to give up part of it to the municipalities or other provincial bodies? To this day, there is no guarantee that they will not keep it all.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, why is there a three-year period? Because the government goes ahead haphazardly, because it has no stable financial policy with regard to municipalities and provincial governments. Why does it not evolve a permanent financial policy, that cities and municipalities might be able to plan their development and know where they are going?

Some hon. members said that the federal government should plan the development of municipalities, cities and provincial governments. To my mind, as far as planning is concerned, provincial bodies, cities and municipalities have nothing to learn from the federal government because it operates without giving any thought to the future. It patches things up, but too late unfortunately. When there is unemployment, for instance, it wakes up and tries to find temporary solutions to the problem.

When there is unemployment, Mr. Speaker, the government also tries to create credit, like today, to change the plans of the provincial governments, municipalities or provincial bodies.

As we have been telling the House for years, unfortunately the federal government has not adopted a permanent and stable financial policy in connection with provincial agencies and governments, cities and municipalities, the latter never knowing what is in store for them.