

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, January 14, 1958

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

FURTHER STATEMENT ON WINTER EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker, I promised the other day to give some information to the house concerning various work projects for this winter. In regard to forest access roads we have had information from eight provinces, namely Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

All the provinces mentioned have expressed a direct interest in forest access roads and want more information as to how the program can be carried out. Nova Scotia has under way a program which would appear to be eligible for assistance. A representative from New Brunswick was in Ottawa on January 9 to discuss details. As hon. members may have heard the announcement over the radio on January 10, Premier Frost of Ontario has expressed his concurrence in the proposed program for forest access roads.

As to costs of the forest access program, Nova Scotia has forecast that it might be able to spend \$100,000 on forest access roads; Saskatchewan, \$325,000, and Alberta, \$180,000. British Columbia has indicated it would be prepared to participate in a large way. In a few days' time we hope to have some information from the provinces of Ontario, New Brunswick and possibly Newfoundland. The federal share of these costs will be 50 per cent. I shall be pleased to keep the house informed of any further developments in this field.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to make the same sort of announcement concerning the campground-picnic area development announced at the beginning of the new year. Hon. members will be interested in hearing that letters have already been received from five provincial governments indicating an interest in the campground-picnic area program, and one other province has indicated that it will participate.

The province of British Columbia has indicated that it will spend an estimated

\$360,000 between January 10 and March 31 and \$400,000 in April and May, with half these amounts to be covered by federal contributions.

The province of Alberta has indicated that it expects to spend during the remainder of the present fiscal year an amount of \$75,000, and a similar amount during the first two months of 1958-59. Half these amounts will be covered by federal contributions.

The premier of Saskatchewan has indicated his interest in the program and has asked his minister of travel and information and his minister of natural resources to study possible programs at once. The provinces of New Brunswick and Newfoundland have informed me that programs will be undertaken. In the case of New Brunswick discussions have already been held at the official level.

In addition to the written notification received from the five provinces mentioned, the premier of Ontario has publicly announced the interest of Ontario in participating in the program. Advice was kindly passed to my department at the official level before Premier Frost made his announcement.

I am sure hon. members will be pleased to hear of the excellent response already shown by provincial governments to the offer of federal assistance toward campground and picnic area programs.

Hon. Jean Lesage (Montmagny-L'Islet): May I ask the minister whether, in respect of the government's participation in these programs, the contracts for works are awarded on a tender basis?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, in some instances, as in the province of Saskatchewan where they use their own public services to provide those roads, I think we shall have to take into consideration their local problems. I would hope that in our urgency to get this work program started immediately the house would not insist that we go through all the procedural processes that have to be gone through in calling tenders. I assure the house that wherever possible I shall ask the provinces—and I imagine they will agree—that if it does not interfere with their normal processes, the tender system be used.

Mr. Lesage: Does the minister not believe that the tender system should be used unless the work is done by the province's work force on a day basis?