

Supply—Labour

support to the promotion directed to home and farm improvement loans the increased cost for the printed material over the last year and the needed expansion to keep pace with demand, the expenditure for winter employment publicity should be increased. That has been approved and this additional sum of \$65,000 resulted.

Mr. Benidickson: I was not referring to advertising with respect to home improvement loans because, after all, that has been a form of providing employment which has been in existence over a long number of years.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): With respect, I think the hon. member is not right about that. The home improvement loans program was undertaken last autumn. What has been done in that respect since is quite additional to what has been done before. The co-operation of banks was enlisted and a new program was undertaken in this respect, and because this source is regarded as such a hopeful one for the provision of employment, a campaign was undertaken to promote the awareness on the part of Canadians of the fact that home improvement loans were available as well as farm improvement loans.

Mr. Benidickson: Farm improvement loans and home improvement loans arranged through the chartered banking system in this country have been available for years. There is nothing new in this regard except that the terms of the loans change from time to time as a result of the amendments regarding the amounts, and so on. I was referring to something that is new—small business loans—where again the enlistment of the chartered banks' support is made with the banks' numerous branches across the country. Since this legislation was passed it has been possible for businessmen to get small business loans. When this new legislation was introduced it was suggested that there was an accumulation of perhaps \$65 million worth of work.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It was \$75 million.

Mr. Benidickson: Yes, \$75 million—I stand corrected—of work that was standing ready and which would be accommodated under this new legislation. The minister will recall that I complained about this later, and said we thought, in order to assist the winter works emergency, this should have been advanced more rapidly. The opposition co-operated in this regard at the beginning and its debate and criticism were reduced to a minimum prior to Christmas. We were very surprised to find that the cabinet had not arranged

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

these regulations sufficiently in advance so that it would be possible, prior to January 19, for the banks in this country to be ready to receive applications for loans. Since that time a number of inquiries have been made regarding the approach to the target of this \$75 million worth of work, to which the minister has referred, by the extension of loans. These were presumably requirements which were ready, on shelf.

A number of inquiries have been made in parliament of the Minister of Finance, because this was legislation initiated by him. It would seem that some of this money is required for advertising, through the Department of Labour, because we have seen advertisements across the country such as the one to which I referred—"Do it Now With a Small Business Loan". I am not referring to home or farm improvement loans, but new small business loans. Presumably because this is a new thing it could not have been provided in the main estimates which were prepared over a year ago. I do feel, however, that since January 19, 1961 when the cabinet's regulations were made public, the Minister of Finance has not been adequately communicative to this house and to the country with respect to progress under this new legislation.

I think on March 9 the hon. member for Port Arthur raised a question in respect of this subject and the reply of the minister was that there was no report available as yet. Later on March 22 the hon. member for Beauce asked what report of progress the minister could give.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Was that not for January?

Mr. Benidickson: Yes, from January 19 to January 31 was the purport of his question. He asked how many loans had been made and what was the total amount involved. At that time the Minister of Finance said he had no information in that regard. I would suggest that while we are dealing with an item relating to the Minister of Labour, we are fortunate this time to have a direct tie-up with an item that appears to have been originally fathered by the Minister of Finance, and I think it is now time for the Minister of Finance to give us some information in a definite way as to the number and dollar volume of loans that had been made since January 19 under the small business loans legislation of this session.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The banks have 30 days to make returns in this respect. If the hon. member had read my answers to these questions instead of paraphrasing them he would have seen that what I had indicated was that if the starred question which was asked was rephrased to include the period