

Grants to Municipalities

ATLANTIC PILOTAGE AUTHORITY

Question No. 711—**Mr. Clarke:**

1. With reference to the accompanying notes of the financial statement of the Atlantic Pilotage Authority detailed at pages 10-11, volume III of the 1978-79 Public Accounts of Canada, now that the authority has eight years experience, can it give an estimate as to when it expects to be able to operate on a self-sustaining basis?

2. With reference to the contributed capital, what plans are there for the authority to re-imburse the government when it is on a self-sustaining basis?

3. With reference to the deficit of the authority financed by the government, are there any plans to have the deficit refinanced by the authority when it becomes self-sufficient and, if so, what are they?

Mr. Robert Bockstael (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): 1. The authority expects to operate on a self-sustaining basis in 1980 and in future years. 2. None. 3. None.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker: The questions enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, before you call orders of the day, in the light of the events which are taking place today and which might have an impact on House business tomorrow, might I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare or the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council whether it is the intention of the government to proceed tomorrow with the measure dealing with guaranteed income supplements to old age pensioners?

Mr. Collette: We would certainly be prepared to bring Bill C-16 before the House. I understand there have been discussions which suggest we could expedite the matter tomorrow afternoon. If that is the case we would be prepared to do that.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MUNICIPAL GRANTS ACT, 1980

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works) moved that Bill C-4, respecting grants to municipalities, provinces and other bodies exercising functions of local government that levy real property taxes, be read the second time and referred

to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Mr. Nowlan: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I thought that in view of the nature of this bill the minister would be making a few introductory remarks on second reading. I was waiting until he spoke. I appreciate the fact that this bill has been around for some time and that it involves a good many municipalities across the country, but in view of the widespread interest in it I certainly thought the minister would tell us, for example, whether this bill, C-4, is identical with the bill brought in by the former minister of finance in the last government as Bill C-3. If so, our discussion might certainly be expedited; a good deal of time could be saved and we could move the bill along and into committee.

Mr. Cosgrove: Madam Speaker, I waited because I thought the hon. gentleman was about to rise to speak on this measure. The short answer to the question he has just raised is that the bill is significantly the same as the one to which he referred. Perhaps I should now comment on the bill before us.

I am pleased to introduce for second reading Bill C-4, which is intended to provide the federal government with new legislation to govern the program of grants to municipalities in lieu of property taxes. The general intent of the bill is to update and expand the federal system of grants in lieu of taxes. This will be good news to many municipalities across Canada, as the hon. member has pointed out. Many members are aware that the bill is in substantially the same form as the measure which was before Parliament on two occasions, initially under the Liberal administration and then under the Conservative administration in the Thirty-first Parliament. I should like to refer to *Hansard* of December 3, 1979, which records the exhaustive comments of members of Parliament on the introduction of this bill on the last occasion.

● (1510)

Throughout my ten years as an elected official in local government in metropolitan Toronto, I was convinced that local governments were in need of increased revenues to respond to their mandate as a responsible level of government. It is therefore particularly gratifying to me to have a role in introducing this bill, albeit a third time, with its modest help for approximately 2,000 Canadian municipalities across Canada.

I know that some members will argue that the bill does not go far enough, and I know there are a number of points of which members have spoken before, but I would urge that the bill, which is in substantial form the same as two bills previously before Parliament, should receive speedy consideration by Parliament because it would indeed give modest financial help to affected and qualifying local governments.

The riding of York-Scarborough which I represent and which will receive some benefits from this bill is the most populous in Canada. In the next few years, the existing 108,000 eligible voters will be joined by many thousands of new residents because most of the land left for residential