

Supply

Mr. Peters: Why should we allow the provinces to decide what the criteria are to be? Why should we allow civil servants to decide what those criteria are to be? Why should we operate this winter works capital project by regulation rather than by legislation? On those grounds, Mr. Speaker, I do not support this type of legislation by estimate.

The minister said this type of program is required. Sure, it is required; there is no argument about that, but it is wrong to legislate this way. This is the same as passing a dollar item. It is wrong to enact legislation by the device of using dollar items in the estimates. We agreed it was wrong and we got rid of that practice; yet we are doing exactly the same thing under this supplementary estimate. I do not know whether the House would be agreeable to standing this particular item, in order to give the minister an opportunity to bring in a bill to implement the objective of the estimate. Obviously, he must know what that bill would contain, because if we pass this estimate, it would be as if we passed a bill which would become a statute. That bill would have no more in it than you see in the estimate. It will not deal with criteria; it will not set the levels of unemployment in municipalities that may take advantage of this measure. The estimate does not say how much the interest rate is to be.

Mr. Drury: Yes, it does.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Yes.

Mr. Peters: Well, I do not read it that way, but it may say that. Certainly, my Social Credit friends who may be more interested in interest rates than I am do not read it

that way. I do not think the Minister of Finance said what the rate is to be. In this item of the estimates we are not told what the basis of the winter capital works project is to be. I think it is wrong to do it this way. I do not think this item meets the needs that I should like to see met in these kinds of projects.

Let me add this, however. I believe the idea is excellent. I believe the proposition is good and I think the three-year provision is to be commended. All the same, I believe we ought to know how the money is to be spent. I am sick and tired of seeing money given to the provinces and seeing them pork-barrel it among themselves, if one may use that expression. This, apparently, will be another instance of that. Let the federal government be given some of the credit for the program. We ought to set the criteria; we ought to decide interest rates and, certainly, we ought to have some input in these programs. Every time I discuss a LIP program I hear officials in Toronto say, "We have to talk to the people in Ottawa before any decision can be made." We do not really make the decisions, Mr. Speaker. The same thing will happen with the winter capital works projects, and I think it is wrong.

May I call it six o'clock in order to give the minister an opportunity to consider a very serious proposition.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, may we have an indication, possibly from the President of the Treasury Board or the Minister of Finance, as to whether we are to continue with this matter?

Mr. Drury: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

At 6.01 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.