

Supply

they had certain reservations, certain criticisms to make. One of them was that the program was not big enough. Another was that notice was too short to enable them to undertake projects on which they felt it desirable to proceed. I am sure that criticism on these lines could be directed against governments generally, whether formed by Liberal parties, as in Quebec and Nova Scotia, or the NDP, as in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, or by the Conservative parties, as in Newfoundland and Ontario. Time is needed. But this program we shall eventually vote on says the federal government is prepared to put into this winter capital projects fund program the sum of \$350 million over the next three years.

I submit we can fault the government of Canada for being late with its proposal, a delay which means that not very much will be done to alleviate the unemployment crisis in the winter of 1972-73. But if this proposal is approved, the provinces and municipalities will be given notice that they can now begin to make their plans for the winter of 1973-74 and for the winter of 1974-75. This is precisely what they have sought—time to consider their requirements, time to prepare detailed plans, time to set up an organization to administer the plan and get the projects into operation.

But what do we find this afternoon? We get from the hon. member for Yukon the usual cynical, opportunistic speech I have come to expect from him, a speech in which he suggests it is somehow illegal or improper for the government to be committing money for the next two fiscal years. I shall not deal with the legality of his proposition; I shall leave that to the lawyers or to those who have learned a great deal more than I about the rules of this House. But I suggest it comes with ill grace from the representative of a party which has been beating the drums against the government because it has not done enough to counter unemployment to come out now with a legalistic argument and propose, in effect, that the government should not proceed with a program which would give the provincial governments and the municipalities the assurance that in the next two years they would have in the neighbourhood of \$175 million to \$200 million to spend.

Mr. Nielsen: That is a distortion; a deliberate distortion.

Mr. Orlikow: I listened to the hon. member for Yukon in committee. I have listened to him this afternoon—ad nauseam, if I may say so. I think he was all wrong, but that is my right. I am sure he thinks I am wrong. That is his right. I suggest that if any member of his party wishes to speak after I am finished he can rise and make a speech. But I suggest it is a cynical and shabby bit of business for the lead-off speaker for the Conservative party, which has been quite properly castigating the government for not facing up to its responsibilities of devising programs to deal with the serious unemployment situation, to say: Yes, we want you to deal with it, but you should not commit money for the next two fiscal years. This despite the fact that only in such a way can programs be arranged which would put the maximum number of people to work under this proposal on the most worth while projects.

I want to say to the hon. member for Yukon that if he is serious in his attitude toward unemployment he ought not

[Mr. Orlikow.]

to come here with what I consider to be spurious, legalistic arguments.

Mr. Nielsen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I make a correction as I am entitled to do under the rules? The hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) has deliberately and grossly distorted what I said in my participation in this debate and in committee.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: If hon. members will consult the rules, they will find I am entitled to rise on a point of order to correct grossly inaccurate and misleading statements. That is exactly what I am doing.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have heard before, in committee, the argument put forward by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), and I have dealt with one aspect of it. I should like to deal with another aspect of it this afternoon. No one doubts that section 20 of the Financial Administration Act is, indeed, the law of Canada. Nevertheless, I think it is also a parliamentary axiom that one parliament cannot bind or commit subsequent parliaments. In other words, it is always open to parliament to override any provision of the Financial Administration Act or any other legislation by means of subsequently enacted legislation.

• (1700)

Mr. Alexander: Why did you not tell us that the other day?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I introduced the argument the other day in the committee but hon. members of the Conservative party were not in a mood to be convinced no matter how cogent the arguments.

Mr. Alexander: We were willing to listen, but you did not make sense.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Vote L12a, which is before Your Honour, is set out in supplementary estimates A for 1972-73 as are the other items to which reference is made. When these are annexed as an addendum to the supply bill, that bill will pass and will become an act of parliament, as any other bill of this House, and in the same way as the Financial Administration Act itself. What parliament, therefore, does on any supply bill and what it will do on a supply bill that follows these estimates is override any contrary provision, including the provision of section 20 of the Financial Administration Act.

One does not have to say directly in the supply bill or estimates that this overrides section 20 of the Financial Administration Act; that is the clear effect of any subsequent piece of legislation that is drawn in more distinctive or specific terms. In other words, I am submitting to Your Honour that there is nothing illegal in what parliament has over and over again provided for in supply bills and has indeed effected through this vote in question.

I have some precedents for the House but I do not know whether they will convince the opposition because they seem to be dug in on a legalistic game. Take the estimates last year for the previous parliament—take the estimates