

the area covered by this estimate for many years to come. I expressed my view to the Minister of Finance that these measures should not be introduced by way of an estimate. Since making my comments yesterday I have had an opportunity to look at a sheaf of papers provided to all Members of Parliament, setting out what this program is intended to achieve, and, in general terms, the manner in which it will be operated. But the papers do not tell us in what directions the funds are to be spent; they merely say they will be spent over a three year period.

My province is no more fair than other provinces. I know it is true to say of the Province of Quebec and of the Province of Ontario, certainly, that there is no equality between opportunities in various parts of those provinces. A large proportion of the unemployment in Ontario occurs in your area, Mr. Speaker, and in my area—both in eastern and in northern Ontario. The measure we are considering by way of an estimate does not say that any criteria will be laid down by the federal government to ensure that areas of high unemployment will receive special consideration. The decision has been made by the federal government simply to allocate the money to the provinces. If the province does not express a direct interest, projects can be initiated by the municipalities themselves, with provincial agreement.

In my own area, as in other parts of Ontario, there are pockets, municipalities, where the unemployment rate is between 35 and 40 per cent. I will give an example. Probably 40 per cent of the work force in Cobalt is unemployed at the present time. Those who are working are willing to go out and raise money through the municipality for worthwhile projects, and I am sure they will be highly interested in getting some kind of capital grant in addition to the labour costs in connection with any project they might desire to undertake. Your Honour may be aware that the federal government did make an offer to the people of Cobalt under the terms of a DREE grant of \$750,000. But because there was hanky-panky between officials of the federal government and officials of the company concerned, this offer was withdrawn. This was a calamity; the total loss to the community amounted to some \$2.5 million.

I am sure the people of this community, as in others, would be pleased to take advantage of the government's proposals if they were to be made available to them on the basis of need for greater employment opportunities. They should be given preference when it comes to deciding the areas in which these funds are to be spent. I have in mind another community which has already raised \$7,000—it is a very small community—toward constructing a skating rink and a municipal hall. I suppose they are thinking in terms of around \$25,000. I appreciate that under the winter works program they can get assistance as far as the cost of labour is concerned. But it is the capital cost, in projects of this kind in rural communities which present the greater problem. Each Member of Parliament who has any interest at all in helping communities where there is an abnormally high level of unemployment should insist upon the inclusion within this program of a proviso which would oblige provincial governments to allocate funds to those communities whose need is greatest and whose interest in doing something for themselves is strongest.

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I said yesterday, and it is true, that Toronto, for example, might decide to build what it might consider to be a vitally necessary road to the Pickering Airport. Or they might decide to build a trail over to Malton. Remember, we are talking about \$100 million over three years. This is peanuts for projects of the kind I have just mentioned. But a fund of this size could be used to great advantage in many of the remoter areas of Ontario by smaller communities which want to help themselves and get men off the unemployment roll. The Town of Cobalt will probably get considerably more out of the unemployment fund and out of the welfare fund than will be necessary to enable them to embark on a substantial works project provided the capital required in connection with that project could be financed over a period of years.

If we pass the estimate in its present form, as we are invited to do, we are saying that the civil servants know best and that the civil servants, both federal and provincial, are to be allowed to make the decisions. I am shocked that members of the cabinet should pay no attention to running their departments and seeing what happens after they get bills passed by this House. But in this case, of course, they are not even bothering to bring down a bill which could receive some consideration. They are asking the House to pass an estimate. Of course, every reasonable effort to deal with unemployment ought to be supported, and I do not propose that hon. members should consider killing this proposal, but they should really give consideration—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but I am advised his time has expired. He can continue with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Peters: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I shall close by saying that other hon. members, particularly those who have not been here very long, should consider carefully the effect of legislating in this way. They will have no opportunity to make an effective input in connection with the program. They will be unable to influence the criteria set. The ability of the provinces to do whatever they wish with these grants is in no way limited; there is no means of ensuring that those communities in the various provinces whose need is greatest will benefit from the money.

I sincerely hope other hon. members will concern themselves about the difficulties which arise when legislation is introduced by way of estimates, particularly since the programs introduced seem likely to last for many years to come. At least, if a bill had been introduced to provide for a winter works capital projects fund, rather than an estimate, a useful discussion could have taken place.

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Ottawa Centre): May I first of all comment on the concluding words of the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters)? He shares the view held by myself and, I believe, by most members of the House, that the type of project envisaged by this vote is beneficial for the people of Canada, especially because of the high rates of unemployment which exist in so many parts of the country. After all, the primary objective of this fund is to reduce the high rate of unemployment which is apparent