

### Supply

800 or 900 inhabitants. The program we are considering will not solve the difficulties of these people. That is why I describe it as a band-aid although major surgery is required.

In a press release dated December, 1972, the government suggested that "the objective of the program is to bring about an increase in capital spending and to sustain a high level of employment." Where is the man who wrote that? This program is merely a baby step in meeting the problems of our cities. And, Mr. Speaker, to take even that step the government comes to parliament and asks us to sell our birthright as a parliament to deal with matters of finance and abdicate our responsibility for considering these matters in later years. It is not worth our while abdicating this responsibility for the sake of this program.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** It is necessary for us to remember that governments must be responsible. Governments cannot ask parliament for blank cheques. Governments cannot ignore parliament—and we in this party do not intend that to happen. When necessary we intend to raise our voices so that this government may understand that from now on there is to be a new era of governmental responsibility to parliament.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** Although well intentioned, I think this program was ill-conceived and may well turn out like the LIP program. During the question period I have heard the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) make excuses for that program. Letters have come from his department which have been full of excuses. We know that good projects have been ignored because no criteria were set. Ultimately, this House must bear the responsibility for lack of criteria with respect to such programs.

It was suggested that this program originated in the minds of bureaucrats. I do not credit the public servants of this country with conceiving such an ill-conceived program. The public servants of this country will function best when properly led. The public servants of this country recognize that they are led by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) who is the arch-conservative member on the government benches and perhaps the most conservative man in this House. The problems of our country demand action, imagination and full-time leadership by the minister. And what does he do? He falls back on band-aid remedies; he falls back on sticky plaster. One cannot criticize public servants for being concerned about such programs. With respect to this particular program, the public servants involved are leaders. Perhaps their problems with regard to the present program represent only the tip of the iceberg. Because of such difficulties morale has been low in the public service of this country.

Just look at the problems of our cities, Mr. Speaker. Look at the transportation problems of this city and others. Look at our housing problems. Look at transportation difficulties in general, and at water pollution difficulties. Look at the difficulties encountered with respect to the redevelopment of our parks and the provision of recreational land. Although the present program has been designed to develop employment, it will not solve such

[Mr. Baker.]

problems as I have enumerated. This program enunciated in the press release with such an air of euphoria will not do the job that the government salesmen, those new salesmen, would like to see done.

• (2100)

There is no imagination here. For a program that lacks such imagination I do not believe the government ought to be allowed credit beyond that which they say will be required for this year. There is a necessity for these programs. They are not the answer to everything, as this government says they are, but they will work as an adjunct to an active industrial society, a society where there is high employment, people can find gainful work and their wages are not drained off to meet the costs of enforced idleness.

These programs can work, but they must be started sooner than this one was started. We should not be debating the matter in February when we could have been debating it in December. As a matter of fact, the last parliament should have debated it in June. It is a slothful government that has put forward this matter. It is a delayed government, a late government and a government that will not be with us very long.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, we have here the presentation by this government of a form of legislation, a bill in fact, under the guise of a supplementary estimate. My colleague, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), traversed this point at considerable length yesterday. I do not want to go into the complexities of the Financial Administration Act in great detail, but at a moment's glance it invites one to look at the item *in extenso* as it appears in Supplementary Estimates A, laying down all the conditions, the allocations, how the allocations are to be secured, the types of projects and the forgiveness feature.

However, the strangest point, and I think the totally illegal point, is that it makes reference to a bill that has been wiped off the statute books. If one looks at Revised Statutes, 1970, in which should be incorporated the 1963 act, it cannot be found. It has been totally eliminated because the 1963 act terminated in 1966. It was dead. This item could have been introduced as a \$1 item. However, for personal aggrandizement the government said, "We are going to make it \$350 million."

Maybe this is a clarion call to the voters. Some will say it is a trumpet call. I would say it is whistling past the graveyard. However, there is this trumpeting call of \$350 million that members opposite may say they have provided for the coming year. It is going to be something over three years. There is perhaps some \$65 million for this year.

I will not repeat the argument of my colleague, the hon. member for Yukon, with regard to the fact that this is contrary to the Financial Administration Act, an act of which I am sure the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has never heard.

**Mr. Whelan:** Oh, yes; I heard you mention it before.