

programs the government has put forward to deal with unemployment. It is the type of program which was originated, I understand, under the Conservative administration of my right hon. friend from Prince Albert who called it a winter works program. It was discontinued by the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in 1968, when he made the following statement about it;

The tendency for the program to involve 'make work' activities has always created problems, and it has proved increasingly difficult to control this undesirable feature of the program.

It is the government's intention to continue emphasizing those programs that are developmental rather than short-run.

Our disagreement relates to the manner in which this program has been put forward and described as a non-budgetary vote extending over three years beginning in December of 1972 and ending on June 30, 1975. I can only reiterate what has been said by many speakers, namely that this vote seeks authority to spend \$350 million over three fiscal years, yet the supply estimate is for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1973. It seems inappropriate that the government should be asking for supplementary estimates for the year ended March 31, 1973. The passage of this vote will give it authority far into 1975. I do not pretend to be an expert on parliamentary rules but this procedure seems highly irregular. In addition, the item described is not budgetary because there will, in effect, be a forgiveness of 50 per cent of normal on-site payroll costs if certain conditions are met by the provinces and the municipalities. To this extent, it seems to me that the vote contains conditions under which money spent over three years will, in effect, be a budgetary item which the government is combining in this vote with non-budgetary element, and it would appear to me that is contrary to section 20 of the Financial Administration Act.

When the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) was giving evidence before the committee he seemed quite sure that the amount of \$75 million was a reasonably accurate estimate of what will be required this year. There is substantial evidence to support his estimate. But for the second and third year, the best he could do was to give a ballpark figure of \$170 million and \$105 million. In my opinion, the \$75 million should have been brought forward as a supplementary estimate and the other sum should have been provided for by way of legislation. What would be the advantage of this course? It is that the legislation could have been debated in this House and commented upon appropriately.

There are many portions of this worthwhile program which could be significantly improved. To be effective, a winter works program requires a great deal of foresight and planning. Careful advance work enables the program to be put into practice quickly. There ought not to be dependence upon approval at a late stage, as is the case now. There is need for great flexibility both in the areas in which it is applied and in the level of effort. Earlier and effective research must be done with a view to determining the areas most meriting concern. The goal should be to meet local and regional conditions. In order to avoid unnecessary waste we should have taken a degree of care in the selection of suitable projects which will be impossible, now, in many cases. There is need for decentralization of program decisions so that there may be greater sensitivity to local and regional requirements. And it would

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be wise, I think, to make sure that employment is offered as far as possible to those who are presently unemployed.

One important consideration is that programs of this type should deal fairly with poorer and less endowed regions. A debate in the House would doubtless bring to light means by which the winter works program could be improved. Had this program come about by way of a bill we would have been in a much better position to make it effective. This is one program of which I am in favour and I think it is extremely useful.

As one who has always been interested in statistics, I should like to point out that in a release issued a few days ago it is stated that persons in the labour force aged between 14 and 25 in January, 1973, numbered 2,261,000. There were 300,000 unemployed within that age group, whereas in the age 25 and over group there were three times as many employed persons, namely 6,620,000. There were only 388,000 unemployed persons in this age group. In other words, although those in the labour force 25 years of age and over number three times those in the labour force between the ages of 14 and 24, the number of unemployed in both groups are approximately the same. I suggest that this is due to what everyone perhaps knows is the reason but which I should like to reinforce, namely the large number of young people coming on to the labour market in this particular age group.

• (1220)

In the Canada Year Book 1970-71, it is pointed out that between 1961 and 1966 there was a gain of 400,000 in the numbers of people under 15 years of age, whereas between 1956 and 1961 there was a gain of 967,000. In other words, there were a gain of almost two and a half times as many people in this age group in the period 1956-61 as in the period 1961-66. Based on the definition used by Statistics Canada of the time when people enter the labour force at the age of 14, a large number of young people are coming into the labour market.

For this reason, it seems to me that at this stage in our economic history we might take a very careful look at projects that would be of some help. During the years 1956-61 the number of births rose from 461,000 to 471,000. The rate dropped rapidly after 1965 and we are now down to about 360,000. What does this mean? It means that in the next five to six years we will have a large number of young people coming into the labour force, and therefore it is time we adopted a policy that will set up the infrastructure that this nation will need during the next decade or so.

I think this type of capital works project is very useful and perhaps should be expanded. Since within the next seven to eight years the number of new entrants to the labour force will diminish, I am sure we shall find there are many things that we would like to do as a nation but that there will be insufficient people to do those things. Therefore, I suggest we examine the infrastructure of our cities and towns, that we construct highways and railways to selected points in the north, which would be extremely useful in the coming decade. Since within the next five to seven years we will have the labour force available to do these things, let us make use of that force.