

Supply

1972, to May 31 of the 1972-73 winter, and from December 1 to May 31 of the 1973-74 and 1974-75 winters.

Now, what do we want to do here? We simply want to allow the provinces to better plan their works. In my opinion, the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), who wondered how this money would be administered, should have read the guidelines and the administrative forms that the Minister of Finance was kind enough to send to all members when the statement was made. He would have seen then what the controls are and which way these funds are administered.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that several provinces have already submitted their projects to the federal government and that the whole thing will be late owing to objections encountered in this House and in committee.

I would like only to remind opposition members that as far as New Brunswick is concerned, it has submitted projects for more than \$3 million and so did Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland submit projects for some \$2 million. I believe that Manitoba will come to Ottawa tomorrow with its list of projects. Quebec also has already prepared a long list of similar projects and it will give it to federal government for approval.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of this House for seven years and always heard opposition members say "too little, too late" about anything the government might introduce, including legislation and estimates. And for once the opposition has changed its position. Now \$350 million is much too much and it is too early to bring it before the House.

I would like the opposition to make up its mind once and for all on what it wants and on its priorities since this is what we have been attempting to learn for a long while.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the eligibility of a project is being discussed consideration is given to the additional direct or indirect employment which will stem from the suggested expenditure. Particular attention is paid to areas where the unemployment rate is high. And if all the loans requested by a province and its municipalities exceed the amount awarded to that province, they must give preference to projects which are labour intensive or which will be carried out in sectors where unemployment is at the highest.

The unemployed seem to be forgotten in this debate, because they are indeed the ones we want to help and, whatever the reasons for this unemployment, I suggest that we must not delay the passage of such an important measure which will enable the various provinces and especially the municipalities to undertake works deemed essential.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to delay unduly this debate because I suggest that the only objective of the government is to help provinces and municipalities. As someone said earlier, some municipalities are over-taxed and it is that very assistance from the federal government which enables several small municipalities to implement some works for the welfare of their citizens. Anyone with a bit of experience can see that the labour used in municipal projects, in road works carried out by provinces or in building construction are very often difficult to place; I

[Mr. Comtois.]

refer to those people who are 40, 45 or 50 years old who could easily be employed in such municipal or provincial undertakings.

I suggest that we are dealing with a need which must absolutely be met now in Canada. We must encourage these people to find a job. I do think that for once this program is neither too early nor too late, but just in time. The amount of \$350 million, when one considers that it will be for a three year period, is very realistic and reasonable. I will wonder why the opposition seems to be willing to freeze these credits, for this project only represents the authorization to lend money to provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I think that when the House is asked to vote, most hon. members will approve the amount \$350 million which I hope will be loaned as soon as possible to provinces and municipalities to enable them to create jobs, something every member of this House must wish.

[*English*]

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter the discussion on these estimates with a combination of concern and some sanguinity. My sanguinity comes from the fact that I do not believe I am detracting from other urgent business that the government may have by participating in this debate at this time.

I have been singularly unimpressed by the fact, possibly because I am a new member having been here only five weeks, that parliament has been able in that period of time to put through only the Pilotage Act, a housekeeping bill, establish a food prices committee and pass Bill C-124 which was needed because of the government's incompetence of the past, but absolutely nothing else.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gillies: In spite of all the efforts we in this party have made to try to progress and move forward, it has been very, very difficult to do so. My concern about this matter before us arises, not so much for the reasons that have been raised by my colleague and the members to my left, but because these supplementary estimates, and the way in which they are presented, tell us an enormous amount about the manner in which the government is attacking the two basic economic problems which face this economy, unemployment and inflation.

We are being asked to approve these estimates in order to do something about the unemployment situation in this nation. Certainly, everyone agrees something has to be done about it. I have argued in this House and elsewhere, many times, that the economic performance you have is a result of the economic policies put forward. Unfortunately, we have not had any new economic policies proposed by this government to deal with the problems of unemployment and inflation in any meaningful way whatsoever. This is the first item that has come to this House that we can take a look at in terms of the government's approach to the problem of unemployment.

I need not reiterate that Canada has the highest rate of unemployment of any industrialized country in the world, and the way we are going we may set a record in terms of inflation. However, let me say that I reject totally the idea that we cannot do anything about these problems. Unfortunately, we cannot do much about unemployment