

perfectly prepared to give our consent to the minister's own estimate of \$75 million now in this estimate. We urge the government to bring in separate appropriations for the years 1973-74 and 1974-75. I take it we will give our projected consent. In that way, the government will be acting within the terms of the Financial Administration Act and not flying in the face of it. Those are my three points on this item, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, the government is being damned because of its complete mishandling of the economy which has produced the highest rate of unemployment of any country in the western world. In reply to a question asked during today's question period, the Minister of Finance said that he was not in the business of making forecasts. I suggest to the minister that he reread his budget speech of May 8, 1972 where he made a number of forecasts. He said, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, my first words to this House as Minister of Finance last February were that my most urgent priority was jobs. This remains my first priority. No economy is working as well as it should if there are men and women in this country seeking work who cannot find it. . . .

I mean real jobs, not temporary jobs. I mean jobs that last and satisfy. . . .

—the first priority of this government is to bring about a further substantial reduction in unemployment.

The minister has now been Minister of Finance for almost a year. He has failed completely, because the rate of unemployment today is almost exactly what it was when he took on the job of Minister of Finance. I predicted then that unless the government was prepared to change its policies, this minister would be the same as the previous minister except that he did not smoke a pipe. The figures which were released yesterday—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but the debate that is now taking place is squarely confined to Vote L12a concerning the amount of \$350 million of the Department of Finance for winter capital projects fund. The hon. member should relate his remarks to this particular item.

**Mr. Baldwin:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Orlikow:** Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the purpose of the capital works fund is to do something about unemployment. That is simply the point I intended to make before coming to the specifics of the proposal.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure the hon. member will not mind because I am really on his side in this issue. I refer Your Honour to the wording of the vote. I quote:

Winter Capital Projects Fund—Loans to provinces, provincial agencies and municipalities as defined in the Municipal Development and Loan Act in the 1972-73 to 1975-76 fiscal years inclusive for the purpose of creating employment through the construction, in the period commencing with December 6, 1972—

I recognize that we must confine ourselves to the vote, but nevertheless the words "creating employment through the construction" entitles the hon. member to speak on that aspect of it. I am sure that members of our party will

### Supply

follow along this line. It should give the hon. member some scope in that regard.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Mr. Speaker, the unemployment figures which were released yesterday indicate that in January, 1973 there were 688,000 Canadians unemployed compared to 665,000 in January, 1972. The seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment for the country was 6.2 per cent in January 1973, almost the same percentage as in January, 1970. According to the regional breakdown, the number of unemployed in the Atlantic provinces has increased from 85,000 in January, 1972 to 87,000 in January, 1973. In Quebec, the figure increased from 233,000 in January, 1972 to 247,000 in January, 1973. In British Columbia it increased from 79,000 in January, 1972 to 95,000 in January, 1973.

Today's *Montreal Gazette* headlines the unemployment figures for Quebec. This should be of concern to the Minister of Finance who first came to this House as a member representing a Quebec constituency. The headline reads "One out of every ten Quebecers reported out of work".

I submit that the Minister of Finance was wrong a year ago when he said that his first objective was to provide jobs. It may have been his first objective, but he certainly did not do anything about it. He ought to be criticized. Opposition members have been calling on the government to take action for the past two years. The provinces and municipalities have been calling on the government to take action. Month after month we get the answer from whoever is Minister of Finance that things are getting better; next week or next month we will turn the corner and the rate of unemployment will decrease.

• (1650)

In his budget speech on May 8, the minister predicted that the rate of unemployment would decline. I quote from that speech as reported at page 2,010:

I expect that unemployment will fall, on the average, in the course of this year, although the extraordinary month to month fluctuation in the size of the labour force will likely continue and be reflected in an uneven movement in the unemployment rate.

The minister, who said earlier this afternoon that he is not in the business of making predictions, made a prediction. The only mistake he made earlier this afternoon was this: He should have said "I am not in the business of making accurate predictions." That would have been correct, because he did make a prediction and it was all wrong.

Finally, concern about unemployment, or, possibly, concern about a possible election and public reaction to this high rate of unemployment, prompted the government to bring forward a plan to put people to work through a winter capital projects fund program, a program which would commit the government to lending to the provinces and the municipalities in respect of approved projects \$350 million over the next three years. And, as the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) has pointed out, 50 per cent of the labour costs of most of these projects are forgivable to the provinces and to the municipalities.

The provinces and municipalities greeted this announcement with considerable enthusiasm. It is true