

an annual occurrence and made arrangements for long-term grants or long-term loans, or both, to municipalities to enable them to undertake the necessary projects.

I was happy to hear the hon. member for Compton say there is a lot of work to be done in this country, because there certainly is. A lot of work could be done in the municipal field, but unfortunately in the past municipalities have been short of money and have had to depend upon assessment against real property for their funds. This is really a cost-shared program, Mr. Speaker, and some of these cost-shared programs have a tendency to be more advantageous to municipalities that are financially well-off and less advantageous to the poor municipalities.

Vote L12a contemplates that 50 per cent of the direct labour costs will be absorbed by the federal government by way of loan or grant. The problem is that the municipalities must contribute the other 50 per cent of the direct labour costs. We know very well that any project requires more than labour; if it is to be worth anything it will require a great deal of material and machinery. Whilst there is a tremendous advantage to the municipalities, this program does not go far enough. It is certainly discriminatory in that it only looks after those municipalities which can afford to cover half the direct labour cost; but on any project the cost of materials and hiring equipment is almost the equivalent of the total direct labour costs.

I am very happy to see the federal government proposing a three-year program for winter works. However, we should have legislation to handle winter works programs over a long period of time. I cannot possibly accept this method of municipal financing, Mr. Speaker, or this method of legislating by supplementary estimates over three years. Under no circumstances could this party—nor could this House if it were really honest with itself—accept this method of legislating.

I implore members of this House to vote against the estimates. The money is not required; the Minister of Finance says that he does not need it this year, so there is plenty of time in which to present proper legislation. If the suggestion of this party is accepted, \$75 million is more than enough to cover the requirements for this year and there is no way that parliament should vote money that is not required.

• (2050)

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I feel sorry for the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) who a few moments ago cried out in anguish because the milk from his sacred cow was drying up. I feel sorry for any member on the other side of the House who came here expecting the government to take the lead in long-range economic planning only to find, instead, that the government is dealing in sticky plaster; it is running from problem to problem and trying to patch them with band-aids. That is exactly what this program is.

When one considers that the government ignored the forecast made by the Economic Council of Canada, that in January there were 668,000 Canadians out of work, an increase of 104,000, or 15 per cent over December, and that this government mentions unemployment in terms of percentages and does not think of unemployment in

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human terms, one can understand why the hon. member for Nipissing expressed such discouragement and why he does not like hearing statements such as those made by members of the opposition.

What this government has forgotten is that behind those statistics, behind the words "in due course", there are men and women and families who live in degrading conditions in this country. This program which the House is considering tonight is just a band-aid being used in a situation which needs major surgery.

They plan for three years, those far-thinking men on the government side, and then say they will give this country a winter works program involving \$350 million over three years. They have been warned of impending disaster for four years. The problems of the municipalities of this country will not be solved in three years, or even in five. The government of the province of Ontario, which so many people on the other side of the House like to chide, plans its capital needs five years ahead when forecasting. This government's vision extends only to three years.

Some hon. members have mentioned anti-pollution programs. In my constituency the Rideau River has been neglected for 30 years, and the Ottawa River area for 50 years.

An hon. Member: Even between 1957 and 1963.

Mr. Baker: The government countenances in the capital of this country a transportation system which in some ways is one of the most inadequate in North America.

An hon. Member: What happened between 1957 and 1963?

Mr. Benjamin: It's the same old bunch.

Mr. Baker: Our problems will not be met with short-range programs. I am not suggesting the program under consideration is all that bad; I am suggesting only that it is not long range enough, that the period it covers is insufficient and that not enough money is provided if municipalities are to solve problems occasioned by their shortage of finances. For that reason I say this program is a farce. We need more. We needed more four years ago. We needed better planning four years ago. There is no evidence of that planning and that is why we in the opposition find it difficult to accept the program.

An hon. Member: What, another one?

Mr. Baker: An hon. member comments, "What, another one?". He had an opportunity to speak. The difficulty is that the bigger provinces are likely to take a bigger bite of the pie. The large municipalities, with officials who are administratively competent and can deal with other government officials, are more likely to benefit from this program than smaller municipalities, although unemployment difficulties seem to be greatest in the smaller municipalities, at least in my riding. The largest number of complaints regarding unemployment insurance claims arising out of maladministration that come to my attention come from a small town, Prescott, with 5,000 inhabitants. The greatest number of problems to do with relief comes from the small municipality of Marlborough, with