

Supply

The members on this side of the House will succeed in getting them to extend the deadline as we were able to do in respect of winter works in previous years. So again I fail to understand why members of the official opposition are so upset.

The panic button will be pushed by members of the government, no matter which party occupies those benches, and the deadline will be extended. You can bet on that. On the one hand, the Conservatives have talked about waste, extravagance and abuse in respect of unemployment insurance. My hon. friend from Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) spoke very well about all those who are unemployed in his riding, particularly in Prescott. This is good. This is the nicest thing I have heard a Conservative Member of Parliament say about the unemployment situation for quite a while. I take it he will be voting for this estimate. I am sure the municipal council of Prescott will come up with some projects to put people to work. I am sure, also, that Prescott will try to get more than its share of the money. I wish them well. It will put some people to work and reduce unemployment and the number on the welfare rolls in Prescott. So I can assume that the hon. member will support this supplementary estimate.

The Prime Minister spoke about all the alternatives available when they stopped the winter works program and brought in manpower training, and so on. The hon. member for Bruce admitted that this was a mistake. I ask him to read some of the speeches he made when he said two years ago that was a mistake. It reminds me of the travelling salesman of 1922, with a straw hat and a cane, who said that you had to sell to make work and had to turn business free all by itself so that there would be no unemployment. If he had been selling soap or patent medicine, I probably would have bought some that night. But since then he has turned around 180 degrees. I was glad to hear that admission from the hon. member for Bruce. I never thought I would live to see the day.

Of course, this estimate is a frantic, last minute effort. Everybody here and everyone in this country knows this. But at least it is finally being made. At least some jobs will result by the end of May or June. I suggest that we pass the estimate and get on with it. We must recognize the kind of country we have and that we have difficult winters. Let us call on the resources of the people and of the business interests in this country in co-operation with the government to plan what we are to do. There is so much to be done. Every winter we have these old-line parties hollering at each other, bitterly complaining and attacking the other for doing the same thing they did a generation or 100 years ago. Surely all they are really doing is frantically struggling while being brought into the twentieth century and a planned economy. Even though they are making a great deal of noise and are engaging in a struggle, I hope they will pay attention to the lessons we have learned.

An hon. Member: Then it will be the twenty-first century.

Mr. Benjamin: They are still in 1890. Unless we learn from our mistakes and do the kind of planning in respect of an industrial and economic program which takes into account our winter and our geography, we will have this

[Mr. Benjamin.]

kind of situation every winter. You can be certain of it if one of these old-line parties happens to be governing. But at least they have come around sufficiently to throw in patchwork stuff, even though it is much too late. They have gradually learned.

• (2150)

I think that if we were unfortunate enough to still have an old party government ten years from now, we would find them bringing in an industrial and economic plan laid out for the next ten years regarding the number of homes, the miles of roads, steel production, automobile production, farm production, you name it. When this was mentioned in the House by members of my party in the 1940s there were members of the official opposition who behaved as if they were back in 1890 who said that members of my party should be deported because they were subversive. Tonight I heard one of them talking about planning—only one of them.

This vote is, in concept and in theory, the proper kind of thing for parliament to adopt. It is in fact a statute, in spite of the wailings of the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), and we should have adopted it sooner. Parliament could and should have met in late November or early December. In fact, it could have provided these extra funds last June in preparation for the present winter; but we did not, and I will not stand here, as did hon. friends to my right who tried to dam waters that have already passed under the bridge. Let us pass this estimate. Let us get on with putting as many people to work as we can for what is left of the winter. I hope that members of the official opposition will then rise and educate me further about a planned economy and planning work for our people.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I want to place a few remarks on the record, particularly after hearing the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) speak and I looked at vote L12a. I was immediately struck by the words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), uttered some time ago, that his policy which the people could lump or otherwise, is just a regrettable side effect of the war against inflation. I think of the frustrations, the anger and the displacement of people which result from such a policy. They say, "Yes, we admit our mistakes." But they admitted them after October 30. It was then that that party came to life and said, "Yes, we are wrong, because we have to listen to those who are really our masters, namely, the people." It is the people who told them that they must be concerned about unemployment, about environmental malaise and all that goes with it, the suffering, the alcoholism, the drug addiction, the murders and the abuses to the person.

When I heard the Prime Minister say today that his government takes direction from the Economic Council of Canada, that they are the people who give him forecasts regarding the direction in which this country should be going, I wondered why the expertise and the wisdom of the people who form the Economic Council of Canada is suddenly being accepted. I should like to put on the record a statement which appeared in the ninth annual review of the Economic Council of Canada, page 89, where reference is made to long-term goals.