

tion Act No. 4, 1973, to increase from \$9,850,000 to \$11,850,000 the aggregate amount that may be paid in any one fiscal year under section 10 of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act for the purposes of that act.

This vote seeks to extend by about \$2 million the purposes of the fitness and amateur sport program. We want to increase the amount of the program.

Mr. Nielsen: But you are amending the section.

Mr. MacEachen: And now my hon. friend wants to delete it. The question is, is that irregular in any way? May I now turn to the main estimates for 1971-72, Appropriation Act No. 3. Vote 40 reads:

Fitness and amateur sport—operating expenditures and authority to increase from \$5,000,000 to \$6,200,000 the aggregate amount that may be paid in any one fiscal year under section 10 of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act for the purposes of that act... \$998,000.

May I refer also to Supplementary Estimates (A) 1971/72, Appropriate Act 4. Vote 63a reads:

To increase from \$10,000,000 to \$20,000,000 the statutory limit set up under section 18(1) of the Canadian Film Development Act—

I have a list of supplementary estimate items which have been carried by the House which I could probably take until midnight to read if I wished. These are items which are on all fours with items to which my hon. friend has taken objection. I believe we must at some point lose patience with the kind of games the hon. member for Yukon is playing with this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: If my hon. friend had a valid point of order, the time to raise it was the moment these estimates were tabled and referred to the standing committee. As Your Honour may recall, it was on a very similar occasion when these estimates were referred and not after the estimates had gone through the committee that the ruling was made to which both of us have referred. I say that if these items are deleted, not only will we take away essential services from the people of Canada, but that action will conflict, abridge and oppose precedents which have been well established in this House since the rule changes of 1968.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, even for me, we have had enough procedure tonight. However, I believe that a few more words ought to be said with respect to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I share the sense of impatience expressed by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and I share his concern for the programs which the hon. member on a point of order seeks to attack. Even so, if it were true that the House is being asked to do something contrary to previous rulings and contrary to our own rules, I would say the hon. member for Yukon has done us a service by raising the point of order.

I point this out because I was on the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates when we dealt with veterans affairs and I am very much aware of the dollar items we agreed to at that time. I want to say that in none of the cases, as far as I have been able to determine by looking

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through the books, do those dollar items amend original basic statutes. They amend previous appropriation acts.

● (2320)

Mr. MacEachen: Exactly.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I am not sure what was before us on March 10, 1971, the date to which the hon. member for Yukon referred, but I have a notion it was certain veterans legislation and that the minister of veterans affairs of that date was seeking to amend the basic acts, the War Veterans Allowance Act and the Pension Act, by the use of dollar items. Your Honour ruled that this was not proper since an attempt was being made to amend the basic statutes in which the provisions were set out. But if one looks, for example, at one of the dollar items with respect to veterans affairs, the item on page 156, we see it reads as follows:

Vote 30a—pensions—operating expenditures—to extend the purposes of veterans affairs vote 30, Appropriation Act No. 4, 1973, to amend section 3 of the Pension Act by adding thereto the following subsection—

That decision had already been made under a previous appropriation act, and I submit it is quite different from an attempt to amend the basic statute. This one happens to relate to a request of the Canada Pension Commission to be able to administer, on behalf of veterans, certain funds which had been left by veterans and others. This was completely agreed to, and my hon. friend from Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) wants it on record that he agreed to it as well. But apart from the substance, which is a matter of some concern, I submit that the procedural point does not stand on all fours with the ruling by the Chair on March 10, 1971.

On another aspect of the matter, I agree with the statement made by the President of Privy Council that if this point was to have been raised, it should have been raised when the estimates were first tabled or in the standing committee which dealt with the estimates. To raise it now as a point of order is, in my submission, a way of importing into the House, at a time when debate is not possible, what is really a debate on substance. We are not, in fact, debating a point of order; we are debating a contention by the hon. member for Yukon that the government does not have the right to use dollar items.

I have made many speeches on the use of dollar items, and I believe those speeches have helped in curtailing the use made of them. But I stated categorically in the Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, when we were dealing with veterans affairs, that in my view the dollar items in those estimates were drawn quite properly and that I was pleased to support them, as indeed were all the members of the committee, including all the Conservative members who were there that day. I submit this is not a point of order. It is, really, a point of debate in the guise of a point of order. The example given is not on all fours with the case which was the subject of previous a ruling by the Chair, and I submit the argument should not succeed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Caouette (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, even though I am far from being a procedure specialist like the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I