

Supply

of Finance (Mr. Turner) when speaking in the committee clearly indicated he would not need in 1973. The minister said he might need \$65 million, perhaps \$70 million or perhaps \$75 million. Our party is prepared for stopgap measures and this is what we are talking about, a vote for \$75 million. However, to talk about voting \$350 million over a three-year period on what are called supplementary estimates is surely an abuse of the proceedings of the House and is no way to enact legislation involving a problem on which I will speak later.

It is totally irresponsible on the part of the government to ask parliament to vote \$350 million for a further three-year period when the government, of its own volition, stated that it does not need the money. Apparently the government is going to put it in the bank. As the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) said, the government will then be able to use the money as it sees fit without having to account for it to the House. Under no circumstances could a responsible parliament contemplate voting for this measure as presented, in view of the obvious fact that the minister declared at the committee hearings that he does not even need the money.

• (2040)

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) once said that \$500 million was only a drop in the bucket. In referring to some of the problems we have heard the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe) say that this is a small amount of money compared to the cost of the Olympic games. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that even if \$350 million is only 70 per cent of that "drop", this party recognizes its responsibility to the taxpayers of Canada. This party is not going to vote money that a government clearly says it does not need this year, money that it can come back to parliament and get when it needs it. To set aside money for this year and the year after that under what are called supplementary estimates is clearly an abuse of the process of responsible government and the handling of public funds.

Mr. Speaker, the measures taken in the past regarding winter employment have been stopgap measures, and I understand that the minister is now trying to get away from that practice by attempting to provide for a three-year period. To that extent I compliment the government for looking ahead, but this is not the method by which it should be proceeding. The government should be introducing complete legislation to deal with winter works and winter employment problems.

Since the day Jacques Cartier landed on the shores of this country we have had winter. Winter is not a new phenomenon in this country. As long as statistics have been recorded we have heard about winter unemployment: it is not a new phenomenon and it is high time a government produced a bill on a long-term basis to deal with it. To produce a bill to deal with winter unemployment in a three-year supplementary estimate is a disgrace to this parliament and to this government's attempts to govern.

This whole procedure indicates lack of planning which has produced an inept economy and it would be impossible for this party, and I am sure for members of the party to my left, to vote for such an incompetent proposal.

[Mr. Blenkarn.]

Mr. Lachance: Would the hon. member entertain a question?

Mr. Blenkarn: Yes.

Mr. Lachance: Would the hon. member tell the House when the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) said that \$500 million was a drop in the bucket?

Mr. Blenkarn: He was reported in the campaign recently—

Mr. Lachance: When and where did he say that?

An hon. Member: Don't you read the newspapers?

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. Hon. members know that they must always address the Chair, even if they want to ask a question. I think the hon. member should abide by the rules.

[English]

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, before supper this evening I had an opportunity to talk to some municipal officials in connection with winter works programs that have already taken place. They say, quite frankly, that if the government of Canada is going to give them money they are certainly not going to look a gift horse in the mouth. I understand that. However, they also told me of the wastage in winter works projects because of the way they have been handled in the past. I understand that there are communities which organize their winter projects in the summertime in the hope that there will be a winter works program. If it comes through, it gives them a few more dollars for the next year's finances but it does not do anything to further employment; the people would be employed anyway, so it does not mean that any new people are employed.

An hon. Member: That is not so.

Mr. Blenkarn: I understand that when the program is announced in November, applications are then made for grants. When the people finally hear about the grants there is a great rush to do something. They tell me that they could do a great deal better if they had a long-term plan. In the past these winter works programs have been stopgap measures developed after the snow has started to fly. They are certainly not an efficient way of solving unemployment problems in winter.

I suggest that this government should contemplate some kind of long-term program and bring legislation before the House to cope with the problem of winter unemployment which is continually with us. I suggest that the government should look at arrangements whereby municipalities can apply for grants for projects that will stretch over two, three or sometimes five years; that when the municipalities apply for the projects there should be a termination date of the following June or July. Upon advice that they would receive money, the municipalities could then organize and arrange to employ people whom they would not otherwise employ. The problem is that in the past these programs have only been stopgap measures. It is high time the government recognized winter as