

Olympic Financing

rush and that everything will be on time. The thing is out of control now, Mr. Speaker.

As to the bill which has been presented to us for debate this afternoon, we are concerned about this coin program and the quality of the coins to be issued. Why have we departed from standard practice? What are the reasons to justify the last minute inclusion in the bill of amendments to the trade marks legislation? Again, I wonder why the minister is so upset about allegations that the government is hiding something. Surely some warning could have been given and some attention could have been drawn to the serious nature and aspects of this bill.

I acknowledge the fact that the minister and his senior official, Mr. Page, were very open, very able and very impressive in answering questions. But I come back to this point: are we joining the countries which put out gold coins with a 50 per cent gold content? Are we moving away from the historical pattern that the value of the gold content should be close to the face value of the coin? If this is the case, why has the position not been spelled out? It is not too far back to 1967 when our \$20 face value gold coins carried \$20 worth of gold. What the government now proposes represents a marked departure.

To confuse the issue further, there are to be two gold coins, each of \$100 face value. Of these, two-sevenths will contain maybe half an ounce of gold, and five-sevenths, maybe, will contain one-quarter ounce of gold. The precise quantities will depend upon the price of gold at the time of minting and transactions between the treasury, the Mint, the Olympic committee and, possibly, the Postmaster General. We are concerned about the fact that there are to be two coins of the same denomination issued to a massive, uninformed market while the existence of disreputable coin dealers is widely acknowledged. Apart from possible counterfeiting, there is a massive, uninformed market for this \$100 gold coin. What is to prevent someone picking up a paper and saying, "Look, the \$100 gold coin is \$235 today; I have a bargain here for \$155", when it is only worth, on the market, \$115 or \$120?

● (1640)

All through the thirtieth parliament and in previous parliaments we have been debating consumer and corporate affairs and the protection of the consumers of Canada against misleading advertising, bad packaging and the possibility of the consumer being cheated by questionable practices on the part of business. Yet here we have the government going into the same kind of thing we are trying to prevent in this country.

If we are to have two gold coins, one with double the gold content of the other, why not have a face value of \$100 for one and \$200 for the other? This would remove the possibility of any advantage being taken of the uninformed market in Canada and the world. I am particularly concerned at what we are about to do in this bill, and I repeat that I am completely surprised at the minister's reason for saying he will vote against this motion. I think it is very necessary that what will happen is made known. I suspect we will find out, when the Mint reports to parliament, what the actual content of the coins will be, but with a gold coin of this nature I think we are laying ourselves open to charges of deception of the public and of

[Mr. Huntington.]

the uninformed buyer. I suggest the minister seriously consider minting two coins with a face value of \$100 and \$200 respectively, if he insists on a different gold content for each of the two coins.

The amount of silver in the silver coins is constant. In this case we have gold coins going to a specialized market, and these coins will have a varying content of which at this date we are unaware. I agree that the minister should not be tied down in view of the unstable gold market today, but there should be some parameters laid down regarding the content of these gold coins. I suggest the minister reconsider his negative attitude to the amendment under debate.

Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak at great length on this amendment, and I would not have spoken at all had the minister indicated any interest in the amendment, for which it was my understanding he expressed strong support or sympathy during the committee proceedings. Let me tell the minister and his colleagues that if there is a continuation of the kind of ramming through committees of bills such as this, with amendments proposed by the opposition being voted down not because of their lack of merit but simply because of their source, then the government can anticipate extensive debate and amendments at the report stage of bills coming before this House.

If the committee system is to break down and the government is to use its party whip in a way that effectively eliminates the contributions of members to make important and progressive changes to legislation, then naturally we on this side of the House—and I say this as a private member only—will have no recourse but to come back again and again with amendments in the House. This will very seriously frustrate any swift passage of legislation that many of us thought might be achieved. Certainly we were led to believe this would be achieved by changing the committee system.

Unless the government is prepared to live up to the spirit of delegation to standing committees of real power to discuss and amend legislation, unless it removes the burden of the party whip which has weighed so heavily upon the committee dealing with this bill and certainly upon the committees dealing with the contaminants bill and other bill, then we will be faced with extensive and time-consuming debate.

There is one other preliminary comment I want to make which is inspired by points the minister made in his attempt to explain why his colleagues are not supporting this very intelligent amendment. As has unfortunately been the case too often in this debate, on this question and on other questions, the minister engaged in equating opposition to this bill with opposition to the Olympics. He used his eloquent and delicate Irish touch to avoid saying this directly, but he clearly suggested that people who would dare question the bill brought in by the government were not questioning the bill at all but were opposed to the Olympics. That is not only patently false but is known to be false by the minister and—

Mr. Mackasey: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the eloquence of the hon. gentleman and I also recognize that strawmen are set up to be knocked down,