

Olympic 1976 Act

to know how much the Olympic Games will cost. Mr. Speaker, getting a precise figure is no easy matter. But because the original estimates have now doubled, I do feel that it is logical, and in no way unfair, to worry and ask questions. So, considering this information deemed by us to be necessary, we had the chance, as members of this party, to meet Mayor Drapeau and Mr. Rousseau and ask them a certain number of questions. These questions were not negative ones; on the contrary, we wanted to know certain things while there were people who were trying to infer that the opposition was getting ready for a filibuster on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, we spent a whole day in committee. There were several pertinent and intelligent questions asked. Now anything could be said about these long sittings. But I refuse to admit that a day spent in committee could be looked upon as a filibuster or an exaggeration when a bill is being considered, no matter which it is, and this one especially.

Then we spent another day together, and there were a number of speeches in which some members expressed their concern and asked some questions on the provisions of the bill and the future costs of the facilities. I think that such action is absolutely legitimate on the part of members of the opposition, and I also believe that it is all within the responsibility of the official opposition, whose task it is to get information from the government and make it known to the public. In my opinion, that is the responsibility of the opposition, and I rest convinced that we have fulfilled our duty with regard to this piece of legislation, as we have tried to do with other bills as well. Our party has the right to propose certain amendments. It was emphasized that Canadians had to be told that they were not being cheated or misled. We felt that the bill was not specific enough and did not provide Canadians with enough details.

The government saw fit to refuse our amendments. The Postmaster General earlier went further than usual when he talked about a somewhat more significant and specific identification for those two coins. And we hope, as indeed we were asking, that there will be a very specific identification on those coins to eliminate any possibility of dishonest speculation. So I think we were answering the desire of Canadians in a quite legitimate and honest way. Incidentally, I do not accept certain remarks that were made public and that we regret, accusing us of either wrongly or rightly playing politics on everything.

I do not believe the debates which lasted two days were marked with partisanship. On the contrary. There was a range of questions. There are witnesses in committee who represent different departments; the same questions were put to other officials. But there again I do not think this was done only to boycott or filibuster this bill. When the Postmaster General hinted publicly that it was impossible for him to withdraw this bill I had not understood the position of the minister, that it was impossible for him to reintroduce the bill. When the mayor of Montreal told us about the urgency of this legislation we understood him. And when the minister made that statement in the afternoon we had already decided in the morning to make a proposal to the government to have a very limited debate, as is the case today, and to show we were in favour of the

principle whereby the federal government wants to help finance COJO operations. But that is a far cry from accepting a legislation without asking a question, I think we had that right and used it. Today, it is on a compromise basis accepted by party representatives that we also agree to close the debate this afternoon, taking into account the urgency of this legislation, for the benefit of COJO.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we regret the amendments we had proposed because we thought we could clarify this legislation and improve it. The government may think that it has within its group of officials the most competent persons to introduce a legislation that would reach perfection. If the government were tempted to believe that, I would have to remind them that at any rate we too have a certain ability. We have people to help us, to advise us, and we have felt the weaknesses and shortcomings of that legislation. Our only aim therefore was to serve the people when we moved our amendments.

I challenge any suggestion that the Progressive Conservative party might have opposed that bill for the sake of opposing or merely to hamper the Olympics which will take place in Quebec. That is absolutely untrue. I noticed earlier that my hon. colleague for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) requested a very special and identical help, or at least a similar help with respect to the games to be held soon in Calgary. I trust that the government will have the same straightforward attitude, and I am among those who, in that province, will advocate a contribution and generous subsidies to those games.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important in this debate on third reading to stress that as a political party we are in favour of the concept of financing the games, and I repeat that it is quite appropriate to emphasize from time to time that we are interested in the cost of those facilities without being systematically accused of asking negativistic questions.

I would also like to say that as a member of this party, I can assure you that we hope these Olympics will be a success. We also wish for the government to be financially involved, whether in respect of services, as was mentioned by the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Mr. Joyal) when he said that government investments and commitments already amounted to over \$100 million through the action of several departments which will offer their services to make these Olympics possible. We thoroughly welcome that involvement, and I will even go further. I will urge the government to work out any form of financial help which might improve the services to be used by the athletes as well as the visitors.

Therefore, Quebec, under the circumstances will most certainly be visited by thousands of people next year and what is more important, and we should keep it in mind, this financing has already provided to certain provinces some tidy sums for amateur sports. We therefore hope that those programs will be beneficial not only to the COJO administration but also to the nine provinces according to their results.

So there is hope, Mr. Speaker, and it is in that frame of mind that we have been working on the preparations of the legislation. I also hope that in that frame of mind, we will not hesitate to support the bill which we find defective but which just the same meets an objective which is