

Olympic Bill

The 1976 Olympic Games will be a success if all Canadians participate. Although they will be held in Montreal, they should interest all Canadians. In fact, as editor Roger Lemelin put it, all of us, especially our youth are much more in need of the athletes' outstanding examples of good citizenship discipline and fair competition that we are of military service as such and the expensive welfare patchwork. Our whole nation, which is in poor condition, physically if not mentally, need the spur of the 1976 Olympic Games.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is my duty to put on record that the 1976 Olympic Games in Canada are above all a nationwide responsibility.

● (2050)

Let all Canadians know that it is thanks to the federal government's representations that Montreal was granted by the International Olympic Committee the privilege—for it is indeed a privilege—to organize the 1976 Olympic Games. Let everyone realize that it was Canada's commitment and that Montreal, for a number of reasons, is the agent of our country in all initiatives related to the Games. Montreal's bid was officially endorsed by the federal government in Rome in 1966, and later in Amsterdam in 1970. It is necessary that these things be said and repeated for all Canadians to hear.

I know that some are frightened by the cost of the Games. Many Canadians still remember the deficit of Expo 67. They should have been invited to inquire into the actual profit of the event: salaries, income tax, direct and indirect taxes, tourism and what not!

This time, with the Olympic Games, it seems obvious, according to COJO officials themselves, that they are determined to decide in favour of a maximum use of existing resources and to stop the increase in costs, for two reasons. First of all, in order not to impose an unnecessary burden upon taxpayers, but most of all because they want to show to the world that from our experience, the games will prove to be financially accessible to developing countries, whether it be Africa or Latin America. Let COJO officials always keep this in mind; this, Mr. Speaker, is the most human and positive dimension of the challenge we will have to face in 1976. Therefore, let us try to be simple and not to dazzle.

From the point of view of Canada, because this matter concerns the whole country and not only Quebec or Montreal, we must ensure that once the games are over our country becomes a land of sports, a land of physical conditioning. The Olympic spirit, the 1976 games, must be the start for public participation. The star athlete and medals are nothing but flashy stuff and short range. The 1976 Games will have been really successful, as far as Canadians are concerned, if the latter enter the game themselves and if, from now on, many more of them practice at least one sport. In view of the huge benefits which will derive from the games, Canada is truly able to finance a project designed to make such proof.

If Montreal undertook to financing the Games under existing programs, Ottawa, through the present government, engaged, unhappily, in dilatory measures. It also engaged, unhappily, in contradictions.

[Mr. Wagner.]

My colleague from High Park-Humber Valley, who is himself an athlete of whom our country was and is still right fully proud, largely proved the weaknesses and inconsistencies of the government in this whole matter of financing the 1976 Games.

At one time, one would have thought that the federal government, in 1965, 1970 and 1973, would have said: Make Canada more amazing at the expense of Montreal and of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, the Quebecers and the Montrealers must do their part, and this is what they are doing, but nothing more, because as far as I know, Montreal and Quebec are still part of Canada.

If we had to start all over again, since 1969, the federal government should have been more involved in an undertaking primarily Canadian and it should have voluntarily agreed to contribute directly to the financing of the Games.

Today, when all directly concerned, Montreal, the COJO, Quebec and Ottawa, have agreed on a self-funding system for the Games, and apparently with enough confidence, let us not create new or false problems.

However, let us make sure that Bill C-196 now before us is the guarantee of the profitable issue of Olympic coins and postage stamps and the efficient organization of a nationwide lottery. It was with this in mind that my colleague for High Park-Humber Valley (Mr. Jelinek) made some reservations, raised some questions and made some suggestions which I hope will be discussed in committee.

And as far as we, of the Official Opposition, are concerned, we are anxious to endorse the principle of this bill and to refer it to a committee so that the improvements proposed in this House by my colleague will be made without delay.

Having said that, we should have no illusions on this point. Through this bill, the federal government is not making any gifts to Quebec or Montreal. Rather, it is only assuming—a little late and almost timidly—the responsibilities it had assumed as soon as the International Olympic committee awarded the 1976 Games to Montreal.

The government of Canada must now, logically and in full awareness of its leadership role in this matter, with the support of the opposition parties, make available to COJO all existing federal services likely to promote the holding and the success of the 1976 Games, and above all, inform the Canadian public of the challenge to the nation in 1976, of the costs of this challenge, but also of the real benefits already hoped for.

● (2100)

Mr. Speaker, when men are willing to take up such a challenge that goes so far as to give a Canadian meaning to the old saying *Mens sana in corpore sano*, there is no room for selfishness, no room for narrowmindedness, no room for stinginess.

Mr. Pierre De Bané (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member allow me a question?