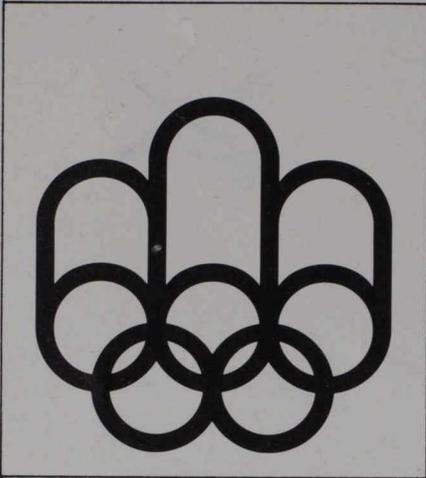


Cover picture shows the emblem for the Games of the XXI Olympiad. A descriptive breakdown can be found on page 4

## Canada Today



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# Drapeau brings Montreal the Olympics

by Simon Jenkins of the Evening Standard

When the 1972 Olympics ended beneath a pall of tragedy in Munich, it was widely said that the old Olympic era had come to an end. The formula of nationalist razzmatazz had finally gone sour. The Games had become far too big and expensive even for the richest of cities – and way beyond the means of the poorer ones. In future, the event would have to be a more sober, less grandiose affair.

If this was said, however, Mayor Jean Drapeau of Montreal can never have been listening.

The 1976 Olympics are going to be the biggest thing that ever happened to Montreal, and if anything stands in their way, it will have to be over Mayor Drapeau's dead body. Mayor Drapeau, 57, has ruled this, the second-largest French-speaking city in the world, for some 13 years and has never done things by halves; and certainly not when he can feel the heat of the world's spotlights turning on him.

The '76 Olympics will be housed in one of the most remarkable sports arenas in the world, designed (needless to say) not by a Canadian but by a Frenchman, Robert Taillibert. It will include two Olympic swimming pools, a special diving pool, a velodrome for cycling, and a stadium which is so designed that it can be covered in winter. This will be used after the Games to stage American-style football and for the Montreal Expos baseball team. Seats can be adjusted for different sports by gliding round the stadium on an air cushion.

The sports facilities will be on the site of a railway yard in the city's poorer East End. The Olympic village has required the surrender of the adjacent municipal golf course. And there will be no nonsense from Free Quebec guerillas, whose spectre looms much larger over the Games since the tragic experiences at Munich. Security will be of truly Gallic severity.

For once, however, Drapeau is having to meet some real criticism. As his colleague in arms, Mayor Vogel of Munich, found in 1972, not everyone in a host city is necessarily delighted to have the Olympics on their doorstep. In their present form in particular, they have an unfortunate tendency to lunatic extravagance.

Drapeau has been ominously silent about his precise estimates for 1976. His staff still maintain that, forgetting about the housing and recreational gain from the Games, they will actually be self-financing. They are relying heavily on sales of coins, stamps and lottery tickets to break the back of the cost.

However, their chief problem is that, unlike Vogel in Munich, Drapeau neither wants nor is likely to get any sympathy from the Canadian Government if he runs into financial trouble. "It's Drapeau's show. It was his idea and he can get on with it alone" was one Ottawa politician's view, fully shared by Prime Minister Trudeau. This federal attitude represents less a gulf between French Canada and the rest than vivid memories of the vast amounts the rest of Canada finally had to pay for the big Drapeau extravaganza – Expo '67.

The cost of the Munich Olympics escalated from an original estimate of £60 millions to £300 millions. Montreal's have already reached over £250 millions. And even the Olympics planning staff concede that public opinion could turn "very sour" if the financing gets out of hand.

### Some criticism

Further criticism has come from Drapeau's blunt decision to requisition the Viau Park golf course. Even his own normally quiescent and largely impotent planning department last autumn finally revolted against this. In a letter bravely signed (very bravely under the circumstances) by 27 of the department's 34 staff, including the director, Guy Legault, they pleaded with Drapeau that "encroachment upon one of the largest and most valuable improved spaces in Montreal is totally unjustified." They pointed out that the site was "totally unsuited" for use afterwards as a housing estate and would become "an expensive and difficult-to-run ghetto".

All this, of course, just slides like water off Drapeau's back. Whenever he is asked critical questions about the Olympics, he just smiles and trusts that "the spiritual value of the Olympics will take precedence over the financial aspects".

For the Olympics are no more than the latest in a long list of feathers in this remarkable man's cap. The greatest was undoubtedly the extraordinary tourist bonanza of Expo '67. The World Fair's dejected remains still litter a group of man-made islands in the St. Lawrence. Drapeau gave his city the second Underground in Canada (after Toronto), called the Metro, and ran it exotically on rubber wheels as some lines in Paris. He gave Montreal Canada's first major league baseball team – inevitably naming it the Expos.

He led the massive trans-Canada highway slap through the historic part of downtown