

Oral Questions

do. To answer his question quite frankly—Take the time to understand—You never understood a thing in your life! To answer his question—It always takes you half a minute more than anyone else to understand. What I wanted to say was that the Sports Pool has been set up and it is going to stay. We have no intention of getting involved in lotteries. We intend to continue the work we have begun, and when you say that we intend to borrow or that the Corporation has applied for a loan—First of all, I have never received an official request in this respect, and second, I invite all Members of the Parliament of Canada, whether they voted in favour or against, to see for themselves that under Section 20, the Act provides that funds may be borrowed to start up and continue the Sports Pool system.

[English]

REQUEST FOR PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question directed to the Minister is this: since we now clearly know that the Minister does not care about public money, will the Minister guarantee the House of Commons that no further funds will be loaned, forwarded, or sent to the Sports Pool Corporation until the House of Commons has had a full public accounting and inquiry into what the money has been used for so far, what contracts have been granted, what people have been employed, and whether there was any tendering of the advertising contracts? In short, will the Minister guarantee the House of Commons the right to inquire into the mess which has been going on under his direction?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Olivier (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, the Opposition's only contribution to the Sports Pool has been to discredit the Corporation. We never said things like the Leader of the Official Opposition, who stated that if he had been Prime Minister for fifteen years, he would never have hired a Liberal as long as there was still one Progressive Conservative alive! That is not our policy. That is not what we do. Certainly not. When it selected agencies to take care of advertising, the Government of Canada was entirely aware of the quality of the services these companies were able to offer.

Furthermore, when the Canadian Sports Pool Corporation was established, we knew for a fact that the Progressive Conservative Party was being supported by the provincial Conservative governments in its bid to sabotage this opportunity for helping people in Western Canada with the 1988 Olympic Games in Calgary, to destroy amateur sport in Canada, to destroy opportunities for getting funds for medical research!

What happened was that the former Government eliminated completely any possibility for the Government of Canada to make a contribution to the cost of sending Canadian athletes to national and international events. That is what you have done!

● (1420)

CANADA SPORTS POOL CORPORATION—REQUEST THAT MINISTER EVALUATE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I must say I am very disappointed in the Minister's answers. If the Government is so anxious to help amateur sport and medical research, there are other and more honest ways of doing so.

Mr. Speaker, my question is—He can count on our support! My question, therefore, is as follows: The Minister is unable to inform the House what the Sports Pool's deficit is at the present time. The Minister is aware that there is a deficit, that it is getting bigger every day and that he is taking public funds to protect three or four hundred Liberal friends who will no longer have jobs after the next election. In the circumstances, I would ask the Minister to inform the House about the financial situation of the Canadian Sports Pool Corporation and at what stage the Minister will stop this blood-letting of public funds.

Hon. Jacques Olivier (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I may remind my hon. friend from Joliette, and I have said so in the House, that I was available—and I have been available to Members on both sides of the House—to forward to the Canadian Sports Pool Corporation requests I received from Hon. Members for jobs for constituents within the Corporation. I accepted these requests which arrived at my office and I forwarded them to the President of the Corporation. If the Hon. Member for Joliette wants me to table the letters I received, I shall be glad to do so. But what I want to say is: we did not do what you are trying to prove we did. Certainly not! We made available to the Corporation, and this is public information, the amount of \$10.5 million, which is allowed under the Act.

Furthermore, if the Corporation ever needs more money, Section 20 of the Act provides for mechanisms to allow funding, with the authorization of the Governor in Council, and we will see what happens then. Mr. Speaker, I have received no requests for funding at this time. What they are trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is discredit the Corporation just to show that at the national level there is no money available to help our athletes, support our commitments for Calgary and support medical research. That is what the Hon. Member for Joliette is doing by persisting in his criticism of the Canadian Sports Pool Corporation and by swallowing everything that has been said and printed without taking the trouble to do their own research. All they are doing is reading a few newspapers, and then asking questions! I am sure that the Hon.