

*Olympic Bill*

feels sure of a failure and finds this unacceptable, then it does not have the right to allow the funding of such an enterprise.

Furthermore, the government recognizes the importance of the Olympic Games, and for this reason is agreeing, with a hesitancy I find disturbing, to share in the project's success. The government, in all sincerity and honesty, should not hesitate to participate to the fullest extent possible. On that basis, the government, which has shown its good intentions through its limited participation, should immediately reassure Canadians and agree to share in both the losses and the gains. I certainly do not accept this hesitant attitude taken by the government, which has limited its activity to forming a responsible committee or participating in a project of national importance.

The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) has spoken of a national character. Such a thing exists—I believe in it—and the President of the Treasury Board is perfectly right about that. For example, I do not accept that the government tries to wash its hands by saying: Only the province of Quebec or Montreal will have to pick up the tab in the event of a deficit. I hope that the government will review its position and will agree to participate financially in the Olympic Games.

In Germany, provincial and municipal authorities put up 25 per cent for the Olympic Games and the federal government 50 per cent. This is the minimum participation which the government should undertake. You believe in the Olympic Games for youth or you do not believe in it. I think the government believes in it as evidenced by its serious commitment but I find it unthinkable that it should refuse to meet the possible deficit.

I welcome the fact that several government departments did accept to supply qualified personnel to make a success out of those Olympic Games; this participation will amount to several million dollars which will be quite appreciated by the Olympic Games Organization Committee.

I think we should adopt a wider outlook and until now perhaps we have failed to assess the true importance of those games for the young and the not-so-young.

It has also been suggested that the games would last only two weeks. This is a gross mistake and I would be the very first one to oppose any legislation in favour of games which would last only two weeks without entailing longer range repercussions. Of course, it would be insane to spend so many millions for a project lasting only two weeks. We are quite aware of the fact that those Olympic Games will be motivating thousands of young who are expecting them and hope to take part in them some day.

One must have taken part in sports competitions for a long time in order to know exactly how much motivation they require. The right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) implied that I had perhaps neglected to go to Montreal from time to time. Well, I had the opportunity of going there often and of indulging in an old favourite sport of mine, hockey, for many years. Therefore I know Montreal well enough, it is only about 40 miles from where I live, to be able to deal with this question. Therefore, the motivation of young people is already recognized and it is in that larger context that one must try to

[Mr. La Salle.]

asses the importance of those competitions. Of course, what may be involved is invaluable, but we know very well that the stars of professional or amateur sport have inspired our young people, and it is in that sense that we must consider the Olympic Games.

If I were to suggest that the Olympic Games will be enough to motivate our young people, it would be a serious mistake and I regret that the government did not do more than it did long ago to prepare our youth for those international competitions. And to simply spend several million dollars of public funds for games lasting only two weeks would be stupid; but the scope of the Olympic Games goes far beyond regional or municipal interests.

● (1240)

In my opinion training these youths for international competitions requires special attention from the government and much more than it has given up to now. Of course, there are additional funds, credits and services are offered under the act to COJO. But what have we done since to train youth, to stimulate it? Should we spend as many millions for amateur sport, we could go even to municipalities, to regions in order to motivate youth and give it the basic tools it needs for training.

I take this opportunity to remind the government of the importance of increasing funds for amateur sport. We are going to spend a few millions and maybe more to see a few Canadians participate in the Olympic Games. Of course, we hope they will represent us by a performance never yet equalled. But then again, we will have to make further efforts and to encourage some chaps in an almost artificial way and in a short time, in order to have an adequate representation. But we will never be in a position to be qualified competitors and have an adequate representation as long as we content ourselves with training athletes on short notice. Therefore, it is important that this government contribute to these games. We have the opportunity of holding these games in Canada, in Montreal in particular, and we will take advantage of it. But we also have the opportunity of thinking about the funds that we should make available to the regions, provinces and municipalities.

I recommended, some time ago, the possible establishment of a department of sports and leisure in Canada. Of course, the Department of National Health and Welfare has, at the present time, funds available but they are not enough to train our youth for international competitions, and in particular to enable them to be motivated, in as much as they have basic tools. It seems difficult for some people to understand what basic tools are. At the municipal and regional levels, we are quite aware of the fact that thousands of young and not so young who cannot practice any sports which interest them for lack of the basic tool, the institution. The loss of voluntary effort is often deplored but this voluntary effort will exist in so far as organizations responsible for leisure will have such basic tools at their disposal. It is up to the government to put at the disposal of leisure and youth organizations the tools which are absolutely necessary.

I take advantage of this opportunity, as I said earlier, to urge the government to make further efforts for the development of the basic tools. I was answered that the estab-