

clear. I commend it to all Members of the House for speedy passage.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Marchi: Thank you for the great round of applause. It gives me great pleasure to rise in this Chamber to participate for the very first time in a debate in the Thirty-third Parliament of Canada. In addition to being critic for multiculturalism, I am also pleased to rise as the official critic for the Ministry of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport.

I address myself to the Bill that is before us today. Consequently, I will have to reserve my traditional maiden speech, which offers me an opportunity to outline the values, traditions and aspirations of my riding, for a later date. Nonetheless, I wish to take this opportunity to thank sincerely the constituents of York West for their confidence and support. I can assure them that that trust and faith which they have placed in me will be fully and enthusiastically reciprocated.

In the time allotted to me, I would like to place this Bill that is before us today and its implications in proper perspective. The present Government administration has opted to dismantle the Sports Pool Corporation. However, I believe that before analysing the merits of this Bill, it is necessary to examine what mechanism was put in place and why it was established in the first place.

● (1220)

The athletic events pools were set up to generate funds over the long term, in order to encourage and assist amateur sports, the arts, medical research and, perhaps most importantly, the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games. Of special note are the much talked about Olympic Games to which the previous government made a financial commitment of \$200 million. The sports pool, among other revenues, was specifically designed to assist in that financial commitment.

It should be made very clear from the outset that this sports pool was not a lottery. I say that because the previous government had no intention of invading the lottery business, a field which is currently held by the provinces. I believe that that intention is clearly defended and demonstrated by the present Bill. The Bill makes absolutely no reference to the word or to the concept of a lottery, something very different indeed from the time when Government members were in opposition.

In terms of the definition, in a lottery a number is taken at random and there is a chance of winning. A sports pool is primarily a test of a person's intelligence and that individual's knowledge of sports, all of which must be used in determining who the winner or loser will be. It is a system which has been adopted particularly in Europe, as well as by many other countries in the world.

I reiterate that the long-term concept of this strategy was a noble one. It was one which addressed itself to the very real needs of the Olympic organizing committee, Canadian athletes, coaches and officials. It was a recognition that in 1988

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the eyes of the international community would be upon us. It was felt that it was our national obligation to stage a truly first-rate national and international event.

However, unlike the government of the day, I do not wish to dwell on the past or to study endlessly the decisions and initiatives taken in the past. Nor do I wish to provide slogans in place of concrete measures of action. It is on an action plan and on the future that Canadians voted on September 4, and I would like to discuss this Bill on those terms.

Towards this end, a central concern in the winding down of a sports pool mechanism infers that there will be, and needs to be, an alternative to take its place; the winding up of another action plan. It is quite debatable whether this Bill, on its own, is right or wrong, effective or ineffective, appropriate or inappropriate. Yet I would respectfully submit that the debate would be fruitless and unproductive for Canadian interests if it was not complemented by specifically defined and iron-clad measures which would replace the goals and objectives of the previous structure in an effective and responsible manner. However, I fear that this is exactly what we have. To date, as far as I can recollect, the House has not been told by the Government, nor by the Minister, of any such system.

On the one hand, the present Government is committed to a contribution of \$200 million for the Winter Olympic Games in Calgary. On the other hand, it has decided to dismantle a mechanism which was to aid in this effort. However, I have not heard, nor has the House heard, in any detail the precise measures on how those moneys will be raised. It is all very fine to promise \$200 million. It makes wonderful and popular headlines to support the Olympics and our athletes. Yet the Government must deliver on those promises, for the expectations of the Canadian people, Canadian athletes, coaches and officials, the Olympic organizing committee, the Province of Alberta and the City of Calgary are great, and rightfully so. The Government cannot afford to play political, partisan games with such a national and international event, for the risks are too great.

Consequently, the real issue *vis-à-vis* this Bill is: From where are the revenues going to come? It has been some two months since the Minister made the commitment, yet we are still unclear as to from where, how and when these moneys will come. I would like to know, and I am sure the House would like to know, if the Minister himself knows. On September 18 the Minister was quoted in *The Citizen* of Ottawa as follows:

A different form of gaming operation could, and I emphasize the word could, continue after that because clearly we have to keep our commitment to the Calgary Olympics and we will.

The Minister went on to say:

—the question is how we're going to do that.

Those remarks have two very serious implications. First, they suggest that after all the howling that was done by the previous Opposition members on the sports pool concept, the Minister has thrown out the possibility that he will simply replace the sports pool with another similar strategy. The statements which have been given by the Minister and his Party in the House on the sports pool concept not only run