

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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SPORTS

DEFEAT OF MPs BY PARLIAMENTARY PRESS GALLERY—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, I rise to move what I consider a very tragic motion. It arises out of a very tragic occurrence on the Hill last Wednesday night, namely, for the second time in 12 years the parliamentary press gallery ball team clobbered the members of Parliament. In fact, they absolutely decimated and totally outclassed the members of Parliament.

Therefore, I want to move a motion which I moved two years ago, but to rearrange some of the words to make the motion more appropriate. I move, seconded by the nine other victims of last Wednesday night:

That this House instruct the minister responsible for fitness and amateur sport to summon immediately all his top advisers from across the land for the purpose of devising a foolproof emergency program with the very difficult, but not impossible, objective of upgrading the fitness of the average 30-year old member of Parliament to that of the average 60-year old member of the parliamentary press gallery.

Madam Speaker: Oral questions.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

BOYCOTT OF MOSCOW OLYMPIC GAMES—CARRYING OF OLYMPIC FLAG DURING OPENING CEREMONIES

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and it concerns Canada's presumed boycott of the Olympic Games.

I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he will confirm for the House that the government and, indeed, the Prime Minister personally, approved a decision to send two young Canadians to Moscow with the Olympic flag, thereby creating a situation in which Canada would have to participate officially in the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games, which is surely contradictory to the Olympic boycott.

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, to the best of our knowledge there was no contact with anyone in government before the decision was made to send the two teenagers. The mayor of the city of Montreal, as the mayor of the host city of the 1976 Olympics, has the normal responsibility of handing over the Olympic flag to the new host city.

Oral Questions

Mayor Drapeau's decision whether to go to Moscow or not was one which was entirely for him to make, and the government has not been involved in that decision. My department has had no contacts with the mayor in relation to the idea of sending two teenagers to carry the flag.

Miss MacDonald: Madam Speaker, I asked whether or not the government had approved of the decision and the minister is now stating that it was in no way involved, which is contradictory to newspaper reports in which an official of the Department of External Affairs said that the decision was approved Wednesday. I presume, then, that the minister is saying there was no one from the Department of External Affairs involved and, indeed, no one from the Prime Minister's office involved in discussing this matter with Mayor Drapeau.

I would like to ask the minister if he is prepared to make that statement very explicitly. Second, I would like to ask him if in the discussion which took place between the Prime Minister's office and Mayor Drapeau's office—which I am sure he will find out took place—any other suggestion was made as to how the flag could be taken to Moscow. For instance, was it suggested that the flag be delivered to the Soviet embassy here, in Moscow, or was it suggested that it be delivered personally to Lord Killanin?

An hon. Member: This is Ottawa.

Mr. Regan: Madam Speaker, I have to assure the hon. member that this is Ottawa, not Moscow, so it could not be handed over "here, in Moscow" as she stated.

An hon. Member: We are not all perfect like you.

Mr. Regan: I am not aware of any permission being granted by the government in this regard. Canadians are free to travel abroad to any country which has diplomatic relations with Canada, as the hon. member knows better than I.

In relation to the question of the boycott, again the government's position was that the COA was requested to refuse the invitation for our athletes to go and participate. The question of whether the mayor decided to go—and apparently he has decided not to go—is a matter purely for the mayor to decide, and not a matter for this government. The question of what representatives he might choose to carry the Olympic flag is, again, a question for Mayor Drapeau to decide, and not for this government. I am unaware of any conversations involving a department of this government and the mayor as to who would be appropriate to carry the flag tomorrow.

• (1120)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: I will direct my supplementary question to the acting prime minister, who at least might be able to address the point that I am raising, and that is the contradiction of Canadians taking part in the official opening ceremony of the Olympic Games when at the same time the government says that we are boycotting the Olympic Games. That is the contradiction, and I want the government to face up to it.