

Olympic Bill

offered for the next three years and in 1976 is staggering to the point of being obscene.

The figures read to us this afternoon by the hon. member for Matane speak for themselves. I will not repeat them. There is the violation of green space and the lack of proper housing. To totally disregard the need for public housing in Montreal is something which certainly strikes home. Perhaps the most important point is that the time and talent of so many people in this country, particularly in that city, will be directed almost totally to these games for the next 3½ years. As this time and talent is taken up, it will not be used to redress the problems of the people. "What about prestige?", people will say. This question is often asked. National prestige is involved. But national prestige brings very little supper to the tables of many of our citizens.

● (2150)

[Translation]

And I might say that in several parts of this country people are getting sick and tired of prestige. They will tell me perhaps that we are opposed to the Olympic Games. No! We are not against the games, but against this particular type of Olympic Games.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that Canada, which is so proud, could set an example for the world by creating a program for the Olympic Games which will be held in this country, for games which would not require such foolish expenses, during which we would insist on a more massive participation by young people. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether really a large enough fraction of the people, of our youth in Canada will be engaged in these games, not as spectators, and I should say indirect spectators because the games will be seen on TV. And if we truly had the spirit of the Olympic Games—they refer quite often to the qualities required since Antiquity for these games—we might very well say: In ancient times, the Greeks managed with much less spending, and engaged in a way which did not change their priorities, which did not take from a certain class of people the resources required in order to satisfy a very small minority.

[English]

Although reference was made this afternoon to the Athenian ideal, perhaps we should take a more spartan approach to the games. Rather than build this Olympic village as proposed by the mayor of Montreal—we do not quite know exactly what it will be except that it has to accommodate tens of thousands of athletes, and to accommodate them very well for a mere two weeks—

Mr. Jelinek: Don't overexaggerate.

Mr. Harney: If 10,000 is too many, I will say 9,000.

Mr. Jelinek: And then it will be sold to the public.

Mr. Harney: Yes; the whole bag will be sold to the public. To build housing of that kind which is totally inappropriate to social housing and to pass it off as a worth-while venture is, I suggest, playing the classic and ancient shell game.

Statements have been made about this long before I stood up here. I should like to refer to the study made by

[Mr. Harney.]

the Social Development Council of Montreal. To quote a brief made public this winter, the council felt that the construction of a centralized Olympic village as suggested by Mayor Drapeau would "have repercussions on the lives of thousands of Montrealers for many years to come". The council went on to suggest very strongly that the plans laid down for public housing by the city of Montreal should be followed, and that rather than build one large housing unit, units housing no more than 250 family groups should be spread out throughout the city.

There have also been other objections from slightly different quarters in the city, and they are worth noting. A body called Le Regroupement in Montreal stated the case very well when it said in a brief which it presented the other day:

[Translation]

We wish to say to the federal government that it must not consider itself merely as a banker when allocating funds to the CMHC to build the Olympic village. It must demand absolute respect for the Corporation's criteria, before approving the Olympic village housing projects.

Le Regroupement also points up to the federal government the fact that it holds the key to at least three solutions for possible sites for building an Olympic village, namely: La Cité du Havre, the Angus shops and the Longue Pointe military barracks.

There are other possibilities. Even if we want the Games to take place, it is not necessary to go about it the way things are being done at present in Montreal.

I suggest to hon. members that it is not too late for us to reconsider the invitation that has been sent out on our behalf. If we decide here and now in this House to refuse to go along with this shell game that is being proposed to us by the government, we can have a definite hand in the invitation and in the planning for the games and in setting up an Olympic games for Canada of which the people of this country could certainly be proud.

I want to end by saying what should not have to be said, but I am afraid it is necessary, and it is this. Our opposition to the games in Montreal is not because the games are in Montreal. To give an earnest of our feelings and intentions, we would be quite willing to see the \$500 million spent in that sector of the country for other and more socially useful purposes.

I would simply remind members of the House, in conclusion, that after the party is over some 3½ years from now, if we go ahead with these games, the hangover will still be with us, and with us for a long time. In the cold light of the dawn that will follow we will still have to walk through the slum areas of our cities. We will still have to turn away in disgust from the polluted St. Lawrence River and from those children of this country who are suffering from malnutrition. The cold light following the Olympic games will not have been worth the binge.