

Olympic Bill

● (2030)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

OLYMPIC (1976) BILL**PROVISION FOR ISSUING OF COMMEMORATIVE COINS
AND STAMPS AND HOLDING OF LOTTERY**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of the hon. Mr. Drury that Bill C-196, respecting the 1976 summer Olympic games, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

Mr. Pierre De Bané (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, before we adjourned at six o'clock I was trying to deal with some aspects of the organization of the 1976 Olympic games in Montreal, the XXI Olympiad and I tried to demonstrate that taking into account the seriousness of the problems faced by the city of Montreal, in view of certain projects which should be urgently undertaken in Montreal if we want to improve the quality of life there, we should choose better priorities because, as I said before supper, to govern is to choose. Taking into account our financial resources, the people's needs are much more serious and each day governments have choices to make. In view of the problems faced by Montreal, which I tried to describe roughly on the basis of government documents, I said that other projects are more urgently needed by this city.

The other issue which I tried to explain is that the mayor of Montreal is implementing those games in a most antidemocratic fashion. I have quoted the letter sent by the Prime Minister of Canada to Mr. Drapeau on January 23, which stated—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but I must advise the House that his time is expired and that he must obtain the House consent to proceed with his remarks.

Some hon. Members: Go on.

Mr. De Bané: I am grateful to my hon. colleagues for their forbearance and I shall strive to be brief.

In a letter dated August 15, 1972, addressed to Mr. Drapeau, the Prime Minister was saying, and I quote:

In spite of the reiterated requests of federal officials, I think we have yet to receive precise information as to the progress of the Games—

In the light of the information presently available, the federal government does not see how the deficit or services could be financed. Therefore, it would be unworthy of responsible and well-advised administrators to grant requests made to the federal government in connection with financing programs such as national lotteries or the issue of special coins or stamps—

And only recently, federal officials and members of the COJO asked Mr. Drapeau where the olympic village would be located and what its design would be and he answered them: You will know in due course. He took the decision without our being able to consider other possibilities because after all, a few months at least are required to examine alternatives and now, how is he going to develop the site he has arbitrarily chosen? Nobody in the federal government knows, but we do know that today, consider-

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger).]

ing the necessary delays, it is a certainty, according to all the experts I have consulted, that while that Olympic village project should have provided the opportunity for a new start for a whole section of Montreal, it is going to be most banal from the design and development standpoints.

And according to my information, not more than 5 per cent of the dwellings built there will be low cost units.

At any rate, the two levels of government have not yet been formally presented with that project.

Mr. Speaker, when one examines the needs of the city of Montreal that I have tried to enumerate, when I note that governments answer that they do not have any money to cope with that situation, and that the mayor of Montreal wants to draw us into that adventure, I say that this is totally unacceptable choice or priority.

If the government would introduce a people oriented bill designed to give the City of Montreal \$300 million, which would bring new vigour and consolidation to downtown Montreal, and settle really urgent problems because the City is the corner-stone of the economic life of the province of Quebec, I would surely support such a bill. But such a project which will last two weeks will result, like "Expo 67", in a micro-inflation. And yet, we went ahead with Expo 67 under the pretence that it would at least create some economic substructure in Montreal, while this will not be the case with the Olympic Games.

Mr. Speaker, those are arguments which explain why, in my humble opinion, the Montreal Olympic Games project should be abandoned.

We have the example of our colleagues in Washington; the United States government had sunk hundreds of millions of dollars in the supersonic plane project and, at one time, the Congress said no because there were much more important priorities in the United States.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that all my colleagues in this House will stop the Olympic Games project and that we will prove to the people of Canada that the first priorities for us, are those of disadvantaged groups, of long-term programs which can really solve the urban problems that are plaguing our big cities: Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. In this way, Mr. Speaker, we will act in the interest of the people because within four years when the Treasury Board forecast proves to be correct and have a deficit of \$172 million, the people will not forgive us for having given the green light to this project.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): I recognize the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner).

Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order! Does the hon. member wish to raise a point of order or ask a question—

Mr. Roy (Laval): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order.

My colleague is asking the House to give up the Olympic Games project and I want to say that I do not think that the study now being made on Bill C-196 will result in