

Olympic Boycott

that is, debt service charge—would be in the order of \$10.8 billion, \$10.9 billion.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker: I gave notice a few moments ago, before some members rose again, that I would hear no more speakers. I think that in the best interests of the House proceedings I must now put an end to that question period. Surely there will be other opportunities to discuss those questions. We should proceed to the remaining orders of the day if we do not want our day to be longer than everyone else's.

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OLYMPIC GAMES

NON-PARTICIPATION OF CANADIAN ATHLETES

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the Soviet Union's move into Afghanistan at the turn of the year caught the world by shocked surprise. The depth of international opposition can be measured by the strength of the vote in the emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly called to deal with the question in early January: one hundred and four governments cast their votes in condemnation of Soviet action. That action continues. The Soviet leaders are proceeding to tighten their hold on what was, and has been for decades, an independent neighbouring country. Such international behaviour cannot go unheeded. The country responsible cannot claim for itself immunity from the consequences of its own freely chosen course of action.

There has been broad agreement internationally that the Soviet action can only be met by concrete measures, adopted by members of the international community as expressions of concern over unacceptable and unjustifiable policies. These measures are not, and cannot be uniform: nor can they themselves secure the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. They do, however, reflect a full range of national reactions which when added together constitute an impressive and deliberate demonstration of world opposition to the Soviet invasion.

[*English*]

For its part, and after the fullest consultation with allies and friends, Canada adopted a broad spectrum of measures under the previous government which have been reaffirmed by the present government. Visits to the Soviet Union by ministers and high level officials have been cancelled. Similarly, a wide range of exchanges in education, culture, and sport, along with a wide variety of exports of manufactured goods and agricultural products, have been halted. Thus, Canadians in a broad spectrum of fields of endeavour—artists, sportsmen, farmers, academics and businessmen, to name a few—have been called upon to make sacrifices in the process of Canada's response to Soviet aggression.

• (1700)

In the framework of the government's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, one issue has remained undecided: participation in the 1980 Olympic Games, scheduled to be held in Moscow in July. This government believes that the international situation brought about by Soviet aggression in Afghanistan makes it wholly inappropriate to hold the Olympics in Moscow.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacGuigan: Since taking office, the government has maintained that it is up to the Soviet Union to create the conditions under which the games may properly take place. Obviously, such conditions do not now exist. Furthermore, there is no present intention on the part of the U.S.S.R. to create them.

We have said from the beginning that an Olympic boycott would be advisable only if effective. A few countries acting on their own, or even more countries acting in an unco-ordinated fashion, would not constitute an effective boycott. Our policy has therefore been to work actively towards an effective boycott.

In the course of the last several weeks, we have canvassed our friends in the western alliance and Third World states to determine whether a boycott of the Moscow Olympics would be an effective instrument in displaying our abhorrence of the actions of the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) took a personal initiative in writing a number of world leaders on the subject. The results of these consultations, coupled with conversations I had with foreign ministers present during the recent independence celebrations in Zimbabwe, have convinced the government that the criteria for an effective boycott are now clearly present. I expect similar announcements in support of an effective boycott by other governments within the next days.

To ask our athletes, who have been training for four years and more for their chance at an Olympic gold medal, to forgo that chance, is a hard thing for any free country to ask of its citizens. The government is, however, convinced that withdrawal from the Olympics is the clearest and most effective way available to make plain to the leaders of the Soviet Union that the world condemns the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and its defiance of international demands for its withdrawal. If, as the Soviet Union claims, the 1980 Olympics are a vindication of Soviet policies, then by not participating in those games, we repeat to the Soviet leadership and the Soviet people that their government's actions in Afghanistan stand condemned by the world.

The Canadian Olympic Association has requested a firm indication of the government's position in this matter. The government has considered the situation thoroughly. We have decided that the circumstances leave us no choice but to urge the Canadian Olympic Association to inform the organizing committee for the 1980 Olympics that Canadian athletes will not be participating in the games. The government does not