

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

OLYMPIC (1976) BILL

PROVISION FOR ISSUING OF COMMEMORATIVE COINS AND STAMPS AND HOLDING OF LOTTERY

The House resumed, from Thursday, June 28, consideration of the motion of Mr. Drury that Bill C-196, respecting the 1976 summer olympic games, be read the second time and be referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, this morning it was suggested to me that I might have something to say in connection with the setting up of facilities for the Olympic committee in order to bring within the realm of practicability the next Olympic games to take place in the city of Montreal. I begin by saying I believe in these games. I have attended other Olympic games and know what the effect is and what the benefits are.

● (1200)

Indeed, I decided last Saturday to visit the city of Montreal and see at first hand what were the plans that His Worship, Mayor Drapeau, had in mind. At the conclusion of the day, he gave me this Olympic pin which I am very proud to be the first to wear.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I spent a most interesting day with the mayor. It is not every day that an ordinary member of parliament has as his personal chauffeur the mayor of Montreal. The mayor spent a good part of the day doing everything possible to make clear and definite the magnificent plans that he has in mind. He showed me the two areas in question, and I can only say that he is a remarkable and inspiring genius when it comes to imaginative plans. He is courageous in revealing them, and has that old and indomitable spirit that leads to success.

It was a revelation to me. The day ended with my attendance at a baseball game. I always receive wonderful receptions in Montreal. Never has it been different through the years. But last Saturday evening at the game, with 18,000 people present, my name was called. I will never forget the warmth of that reception which was everywhere shown to me then and throughout the day.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: After all, it was recalled that the government I had the honour to lead had brought about the establishment of Expo 67. We were not in office, of course, when Expo opened. We made two applications; the second one was successful in securing Expo, and it developed into the essence of Canadianism and gave to Canada a prestige all over the world that could not have been gained otherwise.

Of course, the question of finance arises. In order to assure the people of Canada as a whole that they would not be liable to tens of hundreds of millions of dollars of expenditures, a bill was brought in which became law. It

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provided that the amount for which the federal government would be liable would be \$20 million, the provincial government of Quebec, \$10 million, and the city of Montreal, \$5 million. At the time these amounts were being considered for incorporation in the bill, I discussed the matter with representatives of two other cities and was informed that it was quite impossible for either of these cities to be considered as the site for Expo because the amounts in question would not make possible the kind of international exposition that was envisaged. As things turned out, Expo cost the people of Canada about \$250 million. When it came to the end of Expo, there were accounts to be paid, and the federal government decided to pay them. That is one matter that deserves consideration at this time. I raised the question some months ago, and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) told me at that time that the government of Canada would not be responsible for picking up the bill at the end of the games. It is a matter that has to be considered.

I support those games wholeheartedly. I am 100 per cent behind Montreal being the location because it is one of the great sports centres, almost the greatest in our country. There has developed in that city a spirit in connection with sport that made it possible for the Expos to continue for four years with indifferent success, but never losing that enthusiastic support that was given to the team through the years. Incidentally, the attitude of Montrealers to Expo has given to Canadians as a whole a warmth toward the city of Montreal that could not have been otherwise brought about. As always when a matter arises of which I have no knowledge I endeavour to go and see for myself. I followed that course in South Viet Nam when I wanted to know what was happening, and I followed that course last week.

I saw the two sites that have been chosen. At the one on Ile Notre Dame there is a construction on a 60 acre basin for rowing and canoeing competitions and stands were erected for 10,000 spectators. I saw as well at the other location, the excavation under way for an underground parking area that will accommodate several thousand cars. I saw two and a half million tons of earth being removed. I saw the Aswan Dam when it was first under way in Egypt. Last Saturday I saw something approximating the engineering genius of the Aswan Dam in what is being done at the site of the Olympics. Great as the Aswan Dam is, somehow it did not challenge my imagination as did what I saw last Saturday in Montreal. On the Viau site there is to be a stadium with a convertible roof the like of which has not been seen or even imagined elsewhere. A great, a grand, a magnificent idea.

Of course, the spearhead is the mayor of Montreal who, regardless of the difficulties, always faces the future optimistically. Of course, he sees no difficulty. He agrees that there will be no special assistance or no special financial aid from the federal government for the holding of the Olympics. Those were the words the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) used when I asked him this question on January 25. However, a few days later, on February 2, he stated in his announcement on the Olympics that the federal government, through CMHC, could be spending from \$26 million to \$54 million on the Olympic village, and in addition to that it would cost approximately \$20 million for increased costs of security, customs and immigration.