

stand there have been discussions in Toronto this day on the subject of expansion and there are indications that these meetings have been productive. Beyond that I am not prepared to offer comments.

It should be pointed out, however, that the reported opposition to expansion of at least Montreal and Vancouver—

Senator Asselin: Vancouver first.

Senator Perrault: No. I think the record should be put straight, because I think that certain unfair comments may have been made about the attitude of the Montreal Canadiens and the Vancouver Canucks hockey teams. From reports, I understand that the draft proposal brought in for discussion by the NHL owners the other day had been revised somewhat the preceding evening. It is reported that the entry terms brought forward were far more stringent than had been agreed to in meetings the previous day. I understand that two Canadian franchises—Vancouver and Montreal—insisted that the WHA teams should not be brought in on a poor relation basis and literally forced to enter the league as second-class members. In any case, the facts ultimately will spell out the truth of the situation. I believe they may show that the Canadian owners of the Vancouver and Montreal NHL franchises have indeed been constructive proponents of further NHL expansion into Canadian cities.

The facts will show, ultimately, I believe, that some of the harsh judgments that have been rendered in recent days may have been unfair. I happen to know one of the Canadian negotiators involved in the discussion of NHL expansion, and I know that his attitude throughout has been extremely realistic and positive. His view is that these new Canadian entries should be welcomed on terms that are fair both for the cities seeking entry and for the league itself.

[Translation]

Senator Langlois: Honourable senators, if I may add a word to the answer of the leader, I wonder if my honourable friend Senator Asselin heard Mr. Jacques Courtois last Saturday on Hockey Night in Canada. He explained why the Montreal Canadiens and other Canadian teams had rejected the expansion of the National Hockey League to include teams of the World Hockey Association, stating that the refusal was due to the fact that the American clubs wanted to share with Canadian clubs the television revenue in Canada. This was the main reason for the refusal of Canadian clubs. I think that aspect should not be forgotten because Mr. Jacques Courtois, being the president of the Canadian hockey club, knew what he was talking about.

Senator Asselin: I rise on a point of order, honourable senators, because I particularly want to know whether the pre-election promise to give \$5 million to Quebec City and Edmonton still holds or, if the merger does not occur, will that promise be forgotten? On the other hand, has such a sum been paid to other amateur hockey organizations to promote hockey in Canada? However, if the government decides to give \$5 million to Quebec City and Edmonton, would it not be time for the Canadian government and the Minister of State (Fitness

[Senator Perrault.]

and Amateur Sport) to intervene in that matter and settle the problem of the merger of both leagues and other related matters. If the government undertakes to give \$5 million because of its concern about the matter, is it only an election promise or is the government really interested in making progress?

[English]

FITNESS AND AMATEUR SPORT

GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES—NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE FRANCHISES—QUESTION ANSWERED

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, in answer to a question asked by Senator Molson, I am prepared to make a short statement at this time on the subject of NHL franchises. The first part of the question was:

1. Are the four cities of Winnipeg, Hamilton, Quebec City and Edmonton the only cities to be considered for a grant of several million dollars?

The four cities that have been promised support for the development or renovation of their arenas have been actively engaged over the past year in negotiations to secure NHL franchises. Hamilton only recently indicated an interest in this area. It was necessary to reply at this time to those cities attempting to secure NHL franchises because of the meetings that are being held with the NHL expansion committee—I understand that a meeting has been under way today in Toronto—which indicated that a decision on expansion could be made in the near future. One of the major criteria required by the NHL relating to franchises is that arenas be available with minimum seating capacities of 15,000. If these Canadian cities are not able to show in their applications that seating or plans with available funding are available, then they cannot be considered for these franchises.

2. If so, does that not discriminate against any other city which might expect to work towards entry into the National Hockey League?

In the future any city that could work towards an NHL franchise would be given the same consideration. Again, at this time only the cities mentioned have indicated any interest in bidding for NHL franchises.

3. Will the government give equal treatment to Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, cities which previously financed their own arenas at great cost?

Financial consideration was given to Vancouver when they built the Pacific Coliseum. Money was made available for municipally owned arenas but would not be available for Toronto and Montreal where they are owned by the private sector.

4. In view of the financial losses to be expected in the cities mentioned for capital grants, has the government given any undertaking to provide annual subsidies to the operations so that the thousands of people who build their hopes and pride on those franchises will not be misled and bitterly disappointed?