

Olympic Boycott

question because it seems clearly to intend to do so. But because we are making our decision a month before the time for signification by the Olympic committee, like other governments which have taken the decision we feel that at least we should leave open that possibility. We are speaking about an Afghanistan from which the Soviets would have effectively withdrawn and where the people would be allowed their own free choice of government.

Mr. Clark: The reason I raised the question is that when I expressed that as being the sole condition, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the then leader of the opposition, who is now absent from the House, accused us of grandstanding. I believe that was his exact language. Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacGuigan) confirm that that is the only condition which his government applies to a boycott by Canada of the games?

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, not at all. That is the sole remaining condition. It is not a condition in the sense that we do not expect that there will be any further need to consider it. It is an intellectual condition, if you like.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacGuigan: The great difference between us on this question has been that we have not been satisfied just with a verbal forum. We want an effective boycott, a boycott in which other countries that count in the athletic world will be participating.

The hon. member opposite read a list of countries that are boycotting. Certainly; but those are not the important countries in the world of athletics. Many of the important countries have still to make a decision, and they will be making their decision in the next short time. Canada is a part of that process. I might even add that as a result of a meeting which I had with the West German foreign minister in Salisbury last week, we have co-ordinated our announcement with the government of West Germany with respect to whatever decision they may make about the games.

Mr. Clark: I am sure that Kenya, West Germany, Australia and Japan will be interested to note that in the view of Canada they are not nations whose athletes would make significant contributions to the Olympic Games. But I want to come back to the question of the minister seeking a policy that would be effective. He has spoken about initiatives which have been taken. He quite properly credited the government which I had the honour to lead with starting most of those initiatives. Can he tell us which new initiatives were started by his government, apart from its whirling around on the question of a boycott? Which new initiatives were started by his government since it was sworn into office?

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, I am not certain that I realize myself which of the measures now in effect were theirs and which were ours.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacGuigan: I believe the decision to deny Aeroflot its usual summer schedule of landing and increased flights in Canada was a decision which we made.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. MacGuigan: At least I had to confirm it since coming into power. Whether or not the same decision was first made by hon. members opposite, I honestly do not know.

An hon. Member: It was.

Mr. Friesen: Who else?

Mr. MacGuigan: In fact the principal difference between us, I think, is that we have helped to create in the international community an effective boycott.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacGuigan: The hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) can quibble about which country participates, but our aim is to have enough countries which have Olympic medal-winning athletes participating in the boycott that the games in Moscow will be a sham. We believe that as a result of our initiative we have helped other like-minded countries to accomplish that objective.

Miss MacDonald: What initiative?

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacGuigan) is about his concern with the boycott on grain. Because of the decision announced by the government today, I can say as a prairie member that there will be a great deal of concern in my province from a lot of farmers as to the government's position on the grain boycott. I should like to ask him whether or not it is his intention to announce shortly what the government's precise position is.

Farmers have already seen the price of wheat go down between 70 cents and 80 cents a bushel since the boycott was announced, and the use of food as a weapon was announced by the United States and concurred in by the former prime minister. The farmers are wondering how long that boycott will go on. Will we maintain our traditional amount of exports to the Soviet Union, or is the government contemplating cutting back even further? Does the government have any plans in mind for compensating the farmers? I wonder if the minister can answer some of those questions now. If not, perhaps he will consider making a statement on motions at a later date to tell the farmers exactly and precisely where they stand. It is a serious economic question for the farmers of this country. The overwhelming majority of farmers do not want to boycott grain sales. They do not want to be singled out as the people who have to pay the biggest price.

An hon. Member: That decision was made by the previous government.