

Olympic Bill

proposed scheme involving stamps, coins, and lotteries for the financing of the games. The minister replied that those proposals and requests were still being analyzed by the department. Also on January 25, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) asked whether the Prime Minister could give the assurance that Canada was not going to make a contribution to the Olympic games. The Prime Minister replied that, "... there would be no special assistance, no special financial aid from the federal government to Montreal or to COJO for the holding of the Olympics". It has been this secrecy and confusion that has given rise to suspicion and regional jealousies which would never have arisen had the government been open in its dealings, had the government been prompt in presenting legislation at an early and reasonable time, and had the government in fact simply let the Canadian people know the facts.

● (1550)

Instead of the anti-Olympic, anti-Canadian remarks being expressed by such bigoted opportunists as sports writers Jim Coleman, Dick Beddoes and others, we would have had at this time a feeling of unity in this country as never before. Had the government acted on this issue at the appropriate time, and had the government not left this legislation to the eleventh hour, there would have been an opportunity to decentralize the games and participation in diverse sections of our country could have been a reality.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jelinek: As far back as 1968, government support of the 1976 Olympics was assured, but now we are looking at a situation where the Prime Minister has assured the people of this country that no grant will be forthcoming for our Olympic games. In effect, after giving Canadian guarantees to the Olympics, the Prime Minister has now apparently washed his hands of the entire affair, washed his hands to such an extent that it appears any deficit incurred in the games has been foisted onto Montreal, Quebec and COJO. Does the Prime Minister no longer consider Quebec a part of Canada?

Why has the Prime Minister failed to expound on the overwhelming benefits that will be derived by this country? Why has he not advanced the fact that Canada will receive worldwide advertising over the next four years? Why has the Prime Minister failed to explain the countless benefits that will accrue to Canadians from the worldwide multinational event, an event which will in a dramatic way affect the physical and mental wellbeing of the youth of our nation? The government has expended millions upon millions of dollars on Opportunities for Youth programs in this country. Can there be any greater opportunity for youth than the Olympic games?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jelinek: Even though there will be approximately 8,000 athletes competing in the Olympic games in Montreal and Kingston in 1976, millions will have participated in reaching that event. It is inconceivable that with so many people depending upon Canada, this entire matter has been delayed so long. Planning for staging and financing the games has proceeded not because of, but in spite of,

[Mr. Jelinek.]

this government's actions. But the course of the Olympics is planned. The terms of financing have been spelled out. Where the government has avoided its responsibility, COJO has accepted its obligation. We support the Olympics and the benefits that will be derived by all Canadians.

Because of the lateness of this bill, we are reluctantly forced to support in principle this ill-timed, poorly worded and ambiguous document as well. However, we want to see a number of changes in the bill and will propose these changes, in a concrete form, when this bill comes to the committee stage. For the time being, I want to make it clear we are particularly concerned that there is no mention in the bill of a ceiling on the amount of coins which can be minted. Perhaps the amount should be limited to the number sufficient to ensure the payment of \$250 million. The bill provides that the post office is authorized to promote the sale of the coins. The post office cannot properly promote the delivery of mail.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jelinek: We believe the post office is not the proper authority to administer the distribution and merchandising of Olympic coins. We believe the Mint should issue the coins through the chartered banks of Canada. We will also be demanding accredited market forecasts and distribution allotments. The federal government must be aware of its responsibilities on Olympic financing. To date, details of financing and government statements concerning the issue are vague and uninformative.

The most important and crucial omission in the bill is that of the request for an annual audit and general report to parliament. The terms and conditions of the bill are such that there is no basis for calculation. The public, whose moneys are being used to subsidize the games and who looked on in disbelief at the unbelievable symmetry of the Olympic budget, are now no more aware of what will be spent than before the bill was presented. To date, the only information we have received from the federal government regarding the Olympic financing plan is that it will run a \$172 million deficit. This does little to encourage us to support the bill.

Is the government now denying the accuracy of its Treasury Board report? In addition, Mr. Speaker, the manufacture, distribution and sale of "postal-related products" could have a damaging effect on the Canadian arts and crafts business, as these postal related products are not adequately defined and are open to the decision of the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet). The four years, 1973-76 inclusive, could provide an economic boom period for Canadian craftsmen through the sale of Olympic commemorative items for the tourist trade. At the present time craftsmen are restricted by the Patent Act and the Criminal Code from the reproduction of any official symbol of government in Canada. If these postal-related products are not defined more clearly or at least itemized, a situation will exist where the post office, established with public funds but with low overhead costs, is in direct competition with private individuals who are trying to make a profit for themselves.

If this activity is restricted to the post office, there could be a high degree of patronage with reference to tenders for the manufacture and promotion of these items. In this