

Does it want any games?" And as long ago as 1969 you could not get a clear answer from the government on this issue. That is where the problem became really compounded.

This afternoon and tonight reference was made to a letter which was sent by the Government of Canada, under the signature of the right hon. Prime Minister, to the International Olympics Committee. The date of that letter was May 21, 1969. It went to the international committee and it invited the athletes of the world to come to Canada and support Montreal in the event that it should be selected. The effect of that letter was that Canada put its name on the line and invited the world to come here.

Before that letter was signed, the government of the day was told in no uncertain terms that if it had any doubt about the capacity of Montreal to finance, if it had any doubt about the capacity of Vancouver-Garibaldi to finance, if it had any doubt about either of the bids, it must not send the letter because it would be taken around the world as a *carte blanche* obligation to have the games in whichever city won in the bidding. There is no use quibbling about this. That is what that letter was; it was a letter inviting the world to come to Canada.

Now, because Montreal was apparently not asking for funds there was some discussion on why should we inquire what the cost would be to Montreal, but finally this was agreed. An undertaking was given by the right hon. Prime Minister that neither bidding city would get this letter of invitation until it had proved to the Government of Canada that its cost estimates were accurate and that it was in the interests of the country to put on the games. That was fair. That was taken by the people who met with the right hon. Prime Minister to mean that the Government of Canada was indeed going to concern itself at the front end of this problem, with the costs, and that we would have honest bids. But something happened and I do not know why or how. Only a short time later, a matter of weeks, a letter went out on behalf of Montreal without the Government of Canada ever having taken a look at the costs and studying them.

● (2120)

These are facts. One therefore asks why we are in this mess tonight and why are we debating this matter. I say, look to the spring of 1969 when the Government of Canada, having been told the facts, having been told the significance of these things, decided to ignore them. I think all hon. members and all Canadians must remember one thing. I may not agree with the right hon. Prime Minister about a lot of things, but he is my Prime Minister, and was then, and it was the Government of Canada that extended the invitation. To hon. members and to the Canadian people I say that this country invited the world to come here for the Olympics, and no matter what qualms we may have about how we got into this situation, that is an indisputable fact.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fraser: I have a lot of sympathy for some of the comments I heard this afternoon. There are those who say there are other priorities on which we should spend the money—perhaps the St. Lawrence River needs cleaning up

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more than the games are needed; perhaps there is a greater need for low-cost housing. If we needed to debate these questions, they should have been debated a long time ago. Were we happy about the fact that some of these priorities were not debated a long time ago? I am saying to some hon. members that we were as blind a few years ago as I am accusing the government of being blind in this matter. Three or four years ago—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I interrupt the hon. member to request him to address the Chair instead of his colleagues.

Mr. Fraser: Certainly, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask hon. members, "Where was your voice a few years ago? The facts were not different." Here is the situation: as a nation, we have invited the world, and we have to find a way to do the best we can and put on the finest Olympics in the best sense of the Olympics tradition.

Mr. L'Heureux: We will support you.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I think the position of my party has been made very clear. I think it is a responsible position and the right position for Canadians to take. I do not disagree entirely with what some colleagues to my left have said or probably will say but I ask them, if this bill is defeated, what is the alternative? It may be to pass another bill in which we agree *carte blanche* to pick up all of whatever deficit there may be, or it may be to scratch the thing completely. This seems to be the tenor of the remarks I have heard today.

This is 1973, Mr. Speaker, and the games have to be ready for 1976. Speaking in support of this bill, and speaking as strongly as I can to urge all Canadians to make this a first-class Canadian event, does not mean that there are not questions which are raised by the bill itself. It is not clear what the cost of the games will be. The first estimate in 1968 was \$120 million; by February of this year the figure was \$310 million, and a week or two ago the commissioner estimated the cost to be \$325 million. As I understand it, at one point the federal government estimated the cost to be \$410 million, and we are all aware of the federal government's report which indicates a potential \$172 million deficit. While I think we must support these games, I think it is up to us parliamentarians to make sure that the cost is somewhere around \$310 million and that we do not get into a fully or partially open-ended program.

It is not correct to think that the Olympics belong to cities and not nations. We can no longer hide our eyes and pretend that only the organizing committee has any say in what goes on. Organizing committees get their governments involved. Governments have to pay, and of course it is the people who are paying. The people then, through the government, should have something to say about how the games are managed. We can no longer afford to walk away from our responsibility in this matter.

I should like to bring another point to the attention of hon. members in this regard, Mr. Speaker. This may not be the only Olympic bid put forward by this country. Vancouver may very well put in a bid for the 1980 winter games. That decision will have to be made quickly because