

Oral Questions

SPORTS

MONTREAL OLYMPIC GAMES, 1976—GOVERNMENT
POSITION ON PROVISION OF FUNDS

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question concerning the Olympic games to my namesake, the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Has the government yet reached a decision in connection with federal financial participation in the Montreal Olympics in 1976 and, if so, what will be the extent of such participation?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in answer to a previous question, I have already indicated that the Montreal Olympics are not under my administrative jurisdiction.

[English]

Mr. Rose: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I address my question to the appropriate minister?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the federal position has not changed from that stated by the Prime Minister in the House some time ago.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

INQUIRY RESPECTING DIFFICULTIES OF AN ANNOUNCER
IN EUROPE

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs concerning the representations made by the Canadian government on behalf of CBC announcer Gaëtan Barrette who is now in Europe. Could the minister advise us of the nature of those representations and their results, if any?

Mr. Speaker: Some of those questions could easily be put on the order paper. In this instance I shall allow the minister to answer the question, if he so wishes, but I invite hon. members to consider this other means provided by the Standing Orders of the House.

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if I understand the question correctly, it refers to the case of Mr. Gaëtan Barrette, a Canadian citizen employed by the CBC who was arrested in Greece on October 6 and charged with possession of one half gram of hashish. His trial took place on December 21 at which time he was sentenced to seven months from the date of his arrest. His lawyer is filing an appeal. The Department of External Affairs and our embassy in Greece have kept in close touch with Mr. Barrette, his lawyer, his family and colleagues in the CBC and have provided all possible assistance.

[Mr. Drury.]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

DISABILITY PENSIONS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON
STEPS TO EXPEDITE DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS

Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Perhaps I could preface it by congratulating him on his appointment to his high office. Many veterans who are applying for disability pensions are faced with long waiting periods between the date of application and the date upon which a decision is reached. Would the minister discuss this matter with the Pension Commission and make a statement on motions outlining the steps already taken and the steps to be taken in order to expedite such decisions?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, certain steps have already been taken. We are aware that some of the requests for pensions have met with considerable delays. This situation has been brought about as a result of the new legislation approved about a year ago in the House, which enabled many veterans who were previously unable to apply for pensions to do so. I believe a great deal of progress is being made by the Pension Commission in this respect. I have held discussions with the commission, and in the not too distant future I hope to be able to make a report to the House which will be very encouraging as far as this situation is concerned.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): In view of the fact that applications now total 9,400 which indicates that the backlog is growing rather than declining, may I ask what immediate steps the minister is taking to deal with this problem? I might add that the veterans are, of course, getting older and that it seems to be taking a considerable time to deal with their applications.

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): As to the backlog increasing, I think it will be pointed out in a matter of days, when I make my report, that it is not, in fact, increasing, and that certain steps have already been taken to remedy the situation. I might point out that the legislation passed by the House provided for the addition of seven new members to the commission. These people have been appointed. Hon. members will, I know, appreciate that learning to interpret the act from a legal and medical point of view is a tedious job. Those recently appointed are now in a position to do their work very efficiently, and I feel that great progress is being made. I met yesterday with the president of the Canadian Legion and others from the War Amputees' Association. They are also very keen that we should process these applications as rapidly as possible—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think we might go on to the next question.

REFERENCE OF REPORT ON BASIC RATE OF DISABILITY
PENSION TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the