

Department of Sports

when my colleagues are at their homes across the country. They drop in from time to time and it is nice to see them no matter where they are from, but I am one of the members who is in this House every day during the summer, and it falls to my lot to receive group after group of young people who come to Ottawa from the far reaches of our country, every province and territory. This occurs throughout the summer months. They come here to have their eyes opened to the greatness of this country which is symbolized in these buildings.

I think there is an opportunity in respect of these programs, many of which are exchange programs funded by the hard work of the young people themselves, and others by the taxpayers, to improve the relationships within our country and with the rest of the world. These programs are among the most important that the government has seen fit to bring about in terms of our country.

More than that, I think we ought to see that there is the same opportunity for the people who participate in amateur sport to develop an understanding of what this country and its various regions mean, while at the same time developing that attribute that is important in any citizen, namely, the attribute of participating in a sportsmanlike way, whether we are talking about a business or a profession, in public or in private life.

Let me say to the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) that the motivation behind his motion is excellent, and I support him. Unfortunately, I think we have other priorities, and given those priorities there are other vehicles now in our hands with which to carry out what the hon. member suggests in respect of the department, as well as those important objectives the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain so eloquently put before us this afternoon. I am very grateful for having had this opportunity to participate in what I think is an important debate, Madam Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Joyal (Maisonneuve-Rosemont): Madam Speaker, I am all the happier to take part in this debate on the motion of the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) as this afternoon, after speaking on Bill C-33 to the House, I now have the opportunity to talk to the House on a motion which deals with a matter of significant importance to me, as the representative of the Maisonneuve-Rosemont constituency, since in effect that is where the Olympic Games of 1976 are to take place.

When I was elected a member of the House of Commons last July, one of the first steps I took was to re-read every statement made in this House respecting the Olympic Games, namely the Olympic Act and the speeches which were meant to prepare Canada for that exceptional event.

When I went over some statements by my colleagues from the opposition, I was struck by the fact that they were anxious to make this international sporting event an unprecedented success. I also noticed that they wished the games to take place within modest structures. If some members of the opposition had accepted the invitation by

the mayor of Montreal last Sunday, as other members did, and had had the opportunity to visit the olympic facilities, they would have realized to what extent they are progressing according to schedule, and how very optimistic we can be about this international event.

However, our debate this afternoon deals with a specific aspect of that event, namely the preparation of Canadian athletes for the Olympic Games of 1976. The motion we are dealing with this afternoon, Madam Speaker, is not a new one. In fact, in 1937, a member of parliament for a Toronto riding put forward a similar one. He did so as he returned from the Commonwealth Games which had taken place in London, and in which the Canadian hockey team almost won the gold medal in its field. Since hockey is one of the most popular sports in Canada, this hon. member, on his coming back to Canada after those international competitions, thought that one of the first measures the government of the day should pass would be precisely the establishment of a Department of Sports.

The previous speaker has indicated this afternoon in a very precise way why we can be doubtful about the establishment of a Department of Sports having the desired results. Indeed, we are dealing with one of the areas where voluntary efforts and voluntary involvement of the citizens are most important. The policy now advocated or followed by the National Health and Welfare Department is to stimulate the development, the growth and the initiatives which might be taken by all the organizations involved with sports at the professional or amateur levels. Those programs established by National Health and Welfare Department are not intended to serve as a substitute for private initiative. These are programs essentially devised to back up the plans set up by groups of citizens who believe that physical fitness is one of the most important objectives to pursue.

In 1969, Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to be a spectator at the European Olympic championships in Athens. At that time, I was able to see that the countries which were more successful and had the highest international standing were not necessarily those where sports were managed by a bureaucracy. Quite the opposite, it was those who favoured personal initiative. I am thinking of a French athlete, Colette Besson, who ran the 300 metres and won all the gold medals for track events because she had been able to start practising her sport when bureaucracy had nothing to do with the physical training favoured by her family.

In my opinion, Madam Speaker, if we must call the attention of this House to the preparation of Canadians for the 1976 Olympics during the next few months, we should emphasize these personal initiatives.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. The hour provided for consideration of private members' bills has now expired. It being five o'clock, the House stands adjourned until Monday next at 2 p.m.

At 5 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.