

Criminal Code

I should let the Hon. Member know that this is not a new idea. There have been studies done in the past. The most recent one was in 1983. A task force was formed and sent across the country to study ways and means of improving private sector involvement in amateur sport. That task force came back with specific recommendations. It indicated that by 1984, last year, if its recommendations were put in place, the funding could be on a 50-50 basis; in other words, 50 per cent from the federal Government and 50 per cent from the private sector.

In an attempt to educate the Hon. Member a little, unfortunately they did not receive the political support needed to go ahead with those proposals. They did not receive political support from the Government of the day which happened to be the Liberal Government. Had they received that support, we would already have a much higher level of corporate support and a mutually beneficial agreement between sports governing bodies and amateur sport organizations.

I am not taking credit for suddenly thinking up a new scheme of going to the private sector and saying: "This is a great, new idea". The idea is not a new one. What I am doing is providing political support, encouragement and leadership, to make certain that we can form an entity to work with the sports governing bodies and with the private sector for the benefit of amateur sport and for the benefit of taxpayers.

We are all committed to improving goals and programs and to enlarging upon the support of all amateur sports. Hopefully that will be the case with professional sports, where applicable, such as the World Cup team. We cannot continually go to the taxpayer and say: "You have to give us more". We cannot do that, and the Government will not do that. There is not a bottomless barrel of money to dig into. The Liberal Governments of the past continually dug into bottomless barrels of money, putting the country further and further into debt. We are not doing that. I will be reducing, hopefully over the next few years, federal Government support, perhaps minimally. At the same time I will be ensuring the ability to raise additional funds in such a way that we give the necessary tools to the athletes, coaches and officials. I, as Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, will not let down the World Cup team. I will certainly not let down the amateur sports body, including athletes, coaches, officials and everyone associated with them.

In fact, the Hon. Member may know, if he has been following what I have been doing, that I have just expanded and changed the funding criteria in such a way as to expand our support to domestic sports at a higher participation level. In the past the Government only supported, through Fitness and Amateur Sport, high-performance, elite athletes who were working toward winning international medals in the world championships and Olympic Games. That is very important. We will not take away anything from high-performance athletes. We will continue to support them, even to a greater extent than they were in the past. However, under my leadership, we will expand the support program so that we encourage sports governing bodies to get more Canadians to participate

in amateur sport. That will do two things. First, with an expanded and broader base for amateur sport participation in the country, we will obviously have more athletes to pick from. If we have a broader base, we will have more athletes from which to choose to develop into the high-performance area. Second, and more important, if we have more Canadians participating in amateur sport, we will have a fitter nation. As a result, hopefully, in the longer term we could start reducing some of the increases in health costs which skyrocketed under a Liberal administration to over \$30 billion, not million, per year. I believe, in all sincerity, that enhanced fitness programs and expanded amateur sports opportunities, particularly for our youth and others, can be used as a form of preventive medicine, among other things, to reach the type of goals about which I have been talking.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I will not take up much time of the committee. Hon. Members will know that I am a Member of Parliament from Calgary, Alberta, the home of the 1988 Winter Olympics. The people of Calgary and the volunteers who are working on the Olympics are becoming more and more excited and better and better trained. We are looking forward to the opportunity to put on a show for the entire world. It will make all Canadians prouder of our country than perhaps they are today. I pay tribute to the Minister for personally contributing to that success.

Today we have seen an example of his skills as a bargainer. He has dealt with the Provinces of Canada in the true spirit of Canadian Confederation. He has helped them reach an agreement to provide some of the funding for the Winter Olympics so that they will truly be a national event in which all provinces have participated. It strikes at the heart of the wisdom of the new Government. Instead of dictating to the provinces what must be, it is possible under true Confederation to work with the provinces. When the federal Government and the provinces are pulling together, there are very, very positive consequences.

I urge all Hon. Members of the House to give quick and speedy passage to this particular piece of legislation. I thank Hon. Members for granting me the time of the committee and I wish the Minister well in his further work. I know that it will continue to be of the same high quality, with the same high quality results.

● (1730)

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Chairman, I think the Hon. Member for Calgary West forgot to mention that that was a paid political announcement by the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. Because it is an issue that transcends partisanship, there is no question in the minds of Members on either side of the House that everyone in the country is anxiously awaiting the Calgary Olympics. I think the Government, the Opposition and all Canadians should do all that they can to ensure that the Olympics are going to be the success that we all want them to be. That is a given and that certainly is something apart from this particular piece of legislation.