

Sports

My first point is this: I doubt seriously whether the government should be allowed to compete with private enterprise.

Art hon. Member: It is doing it in the oil business.

Mr. Ethier: About 300,000 Canadians participate actively in this sport, I am informed, and as that number includes high-salaried players playing for professional teams in our two hockey leagues, I am sure many young players today anticipate a future as professional hockey players. Without private enterprise which constantly contributes financially to our young hockey players, a great many of our young people would be deprived of an opportunity for a career that not many fields in private enterprise could offer if hockey were eliminated.

One must also consider the advantage derived from each young Canadian being able to develop physically while practising this sport. As one who has coached many junior hockey teams for numerous years, I would certainly feel a great loss if private owners of hockey clubs stopped sponsoring hockey because of a drop in their revenues occasioned by the competition of hockey teams sponsored by our government.

● (1740)

Another point we must consider is the high rate of delinquency in the young people of our country. We must appreciate what hockey does to reduce this. We must take into account the amount of time our youngsters spend in outdoor rinks and arenas. This takes them off the streets where they often get into mischief. We should be thankful we have Canadians interested enough to invest in and promote such a healthy sport.

In this bill the hon. member asks that donations to Team Canada or Hockey Canada be tax deductible. I am sure that at the present time donations to Hockey Canada are tax deductible because it is a non-profit corporation. The hon. member must also consider the possibility of teams being refused in international competition. Hockey players receiving remuneration or a salary certainly could not compete in the Olympics. For this reason I felt I should speak on this bill.

I enjoy the wonderful sport of hockey, as do most Canadians. I want to be assured it will continue. However, I cannot go along with the hon. member in asking that the government compete with the private sector. I am sorry to say to the hon. member that although I love the sport, I will not support this motion.

Mr. Barnett J. Danson (York North): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in this debate because the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Mr. Hueglin) has raised a point we must think about and discuss. I agree that people in his constituency, like mine and probably most others, feel very strongly about this subject. However, we must be careful that we do not get carried away in our enthusiasm to the point where we forget about sport for the sake of sport. We should not concentrate too much upon winning. This attitude has disturbed me somewhat.

In our whole orientation toward sports, particularly hockey, many of us grew up in the days when we did not have artificial rinks except for very special occasions. This

[Mr. Ethier.]

made for a very erratic schedule, certainly around the Toronto area. I appreciate that it would be different in the Edmonton area. Even though it is windy there, if you could get on the windward side of the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski), you would be all right; you would be well protected.

In our relationship to sport there should not be emphasis upon winning at all costs. This is important. We have to rethink what we are trying to do in our society and in training our children. I am disturbed in this respect. I have four sons, all of whom are serious hockey and football players as well as participators in many other sports. Despite the fact they are good, clean-cut athletes, I think they are taught to be dirty players: that is part of the game.

I spoke to a high school teacher who is coaching a football team. The school does not have a grade 13 and this is the first year it has had a senior team. Strangely enough, after losing the first game 48-0 and the second 38-0, they started to win the odd game. He took these young men who never played football before and welded them into a team. I am somewhat embarrassed to say that I am sure he is teaching them every dirty trick in the book.

An hon. Member: Did you speak to the principal?

Mr. Danson: I suggest it is a matter of principle.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson: The point is, we can and must have clean sports. We must take away the emphasis on winning. This applies as much to international sports as to national sports in Canada. It seems we are building up an international relationship through hockey. I was proud of our national team but I was astounded at the behaviour of our fans who went to Moscow. Although I attended only one game, I was embarrassed at the performance of the fans in Canada. It was the greatest hockey I have ever seen—absolutely first-rate hockey. Certainly we should take hockey seriously. However, this killer instinct of winning for the sake of winning, or believing that Canada would be dishonoured if it lost a hockey game to the Soviet Union, is not right.

I always understood that lacrosse was our national sport but we seem to take hockey as the national sport. We should be pleased that hockey has been taken up by so many countries with Canadian coaches and players. These nations have done extremely well on their own. If they beat us in hockey that is part of the game, although I like to see us win.

Mr. Paproski: It is a good thing they won.

Mr. Danson: I think the hon. member has a point. I wonder how many seats in this House it would have cost if we had lost that series. I made a canvass in connection with the series, although I could not go from house to house to canvass all my constituents. I remember people running out on to their lawns when the winning goal was scored by Henderson. Two young men were roofing a house in my constituency. They had some other supplies on hand to help them enjoy the game and I thought they