

Olympic Bill

Mr. Rose: I think he said it was a state of mind. I would not go so far as to suggest that his mind has been unhinged. We might have heard about the various costs and benefits, but the ones I have been able to weigh—and they are the tangible ones, not the intangible ones like the spirit, the image, and that kind of thing—lead me to believe that the Canadian people, and more particularly the people of Montreal, are losers. I had hoped that during the past four months we might have heard about plans for a far less expensive Olympics. I looked forward to an indication that the games might be dispersed over a wider area of central Canada, with Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto and Quebec city joining Kingston as sites for some of the events at least. I had hoped that the wrangling about the location for the village might have ceased and the people of Montreal might have been at least partially satisfied that their long term interests were being considered seriously by their civic and provincial administration. However, not a thing has happened to allay my misgivings or to dispel my fears that the Drapeau predilection for grandstanding and extravaganzas has diminished one iota.

Even the Treasury Board estimates in January of the forthcoming Olympic deficit of nearly \$200 million—or \$173 million according to the documents tabled—have never been seriously challenged. I think it is conservative to suggest that the games will cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$500 million. The Munich experience started out at \$150 million and ended at \$700 million. Montreal started at \$310 million—and we do not know where it is going to go from there. The President of the Treasury Board promised to keep us up to date on the escalating figures. He cannot even keep track of them, they are moving so quickly.

We are therefore being asked in this legislation “at no cost to the federal government” to put up \$200 million or 80 per cent of the \$310 million games budget with no real assurance that the target will be met. If raising money by issuing special coins, stamps, etc. is such a good idea and, to paraphrase the government, will not cost the country a cent, why does the Government of Canada not consider this suggestion, which I am certain will find support among my hon. friends in the Social Credit party, and issue immediately to each of the two million plus old age pensioners a \$20 legal currency Canadian coin? It will cost the treasury about \$8 a pensioner to do this, and the seigniorage of \$12 would become an inexpensive raise to each senior citizen.

● (1640)

Undoubtedly, most of the OAP coins would be squirreled away as souvenirs, given to grandchildren, or even sold to coin collectors, either in Canada or abroad, and therefore would be of little direct cost to the treasury compared with the benefits, if we follow the logic of the President of the Treasury Board with regard to the Olympic Games. But this would do more for more people. Some pensioners, of course only the frivolous ones, might be tempted to fritter away their money on non-essentials like food, shelter and prescription drugs. However, strong social and fiscal sanctions could be developed and taken by the President of the Treasury Board to cope with that eventuality.

[Mr. Jelinek.]

If the 1976 Olympic games are worthwhile at all, then they are worth funding by all Canadians. If they are not worthwhile, then they are not worth funding at all in any way, with gimmicks or otherwise. On balance, I do not think they are worthwhile and, therefore, despite the political risks involved, despite the flack I am going to get from the generally uncritical sports journalists, and despite the misrepresentation of my motives both in Quebec and in western Canada, I intend to vote against Bill C-196 on second reading.

I am not so naïve as to believe that my opposition, or my party's opposition to the bill before us will kill the Olympic games. The momentum for the Olympic games is just too great. The winter Olympic games, of course, are a different kettle. The winter Olympics were recently stopped in Denver, and they were repudiated in Vancouver. But in going forward in the case of the Montreal Olympics, no critical aspect of the games should be hidden from the public who are going to pay for them in spite of the assurances to the contrary. I and my party will do all we can to make sure that no respect of the 1976 Olympics goes either unchallenged or unventilated.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), who represents the riding of Mount Royal, comes into this House tomorrow and asks us to approve a federal expenditure of \$500 million over the next few years for the sole purpose of building houses for the poor people of Montreal East, I am certain that my party and I will be the first to congratulate him and to support him on his legislation. I do not know if the hecklers across the aisle are through with their speeches, Mr. Speaker, but I am through with mine.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is the first point of order upon which I have risen since I came to this House. I hope all hon. members will note that I have not used points of order unduly, but having listened to my hon. friend I think I must remark that he has unintentionally, no doubt, misled the House, because Vancouver did not repudiate the winter games bid this year. The Vancouver decision not to participate for 1976 was based on the proper thinking that they would not be ready in time for 1976 and again I say that my hon. friend, no doubt mistakenly, has misled the House in this regard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that the intervention by the hon. member for Vancouver South relates to something that could have been corrected during the debate, but it really is not a point of order. If we adopted the method of rising on a point of order every time we disagreed with each other in this place, I think we would all be speaking at once. I have said it before, and I am going to say it again, that I think it is a very bad practice for us to adopt. I can understand that sometimes when a person is faced with a limited debate which has to be concluded by 9.45, he would like to have a chance at least to get to the person with whom he disagrees. But this sort of thing—no. Really the present debate is wide open. There is no limitation, and there cannot be a limitation until everybody has had his or her say in this chamber.

I must ask, on behalf of the chair, to have a limitation on these points of so-called order raised by hon. members. I say this with great respect to the hon. member. I know