

Statements by Ministers

[Translation]

SPORTS**GOVERNMENT POLICY ON ANTI-DOPING**

Hon. Jean Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)): Mr. Speaker, for several months now, Canadians have followed very closely the public hearings of the commission of inquiry into drug use in amateur sport, better known as the Dubin Inquiry.

Before the Olympic Games in Seoul, probably very few people in Canada knew about anabolic steroids. Since the incidents involving Canadian athletes and the appointment of a commission of inquiry chaired by Justice Charles Dubin, the least one could say is that Canadians have become very much aware of the problems of drug use in sport.

For governments, however, the problem of doping and cheating in sport is not a new one. In 1983, after the Pan-American Games when several Canadian athletes who had tested positive were sent back to Canada, the federal Government drafted its very first anti-doping policy.

In 1985, my predecessor, the Hon. Otto Jelinek, announced a major tightening of the policy drafted in 1983. As a result, any athlete who tests positive for anabolic steroids is suspended for life by Sports Canada, even for a first offence.

Mr. Speaker, Canadian sanctions are among the severest in the world.

We have decided to take a firm stand at the national level, a decision that has also led us to try and influence the international sports community as a whole.

[English]

Canada's severe policy in the area of doping in sports obligated us as a country to assume a leadership role in trying to eradicate this problem world-wide. In 1986, the Canadian Minister of Sport was afforded the privilege of addressing the Council of Europe at an assembly of 25 Sports Ministers from Europe. At that time the Hon. Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Jelinek) chose to speak on the very serious issue of doping in sport and the urgency of the sport community to act. The importance of an international effort was put into perspective in the

following remarks which I want to quote, keeping in mind these words were pronounced in 1986:

In short, the objective must be universality. The nature of this issue, indeed what may lie at the very root of it is concern that the actions of one country may outstrip the actions of others, thus disadvantaging in the short run at least, those who undertake the strongest action. I do not personally believe in a qualified or conditional code of ethics, but we all know that our athletes however much they may wish to compete in an environment not only of a relative fairness but which conforms to high personal standards of morality, do not want to be faced with the ambiguity and temptations which arise from inconsistent application of rules.

In view of reaching our objective, that Minister had a clear vision of Canada's role. I want to draw from the same speech and quote:

I believe that Canada's position permits us to make an offer to play the credible broker as between east and west, and among western nations around this table, with the objective of facilitating the eventual adoption of international agreements on the widest possible basis.

During the successful Calgary Olympics in 1988, the Canadian Government, with the IOC, succeeded in convincing Governments from the east bloc and west bloc to sit down together with representatives of sport federations and hold the first world permanent conference on anti-doping in sport.

This conference, held in Ottawa in June 1988 before the Seoul Olympics and co-hosted by the IOC represented by its vice-president, Prince Alexandre de Merode, and the Canadian Minister, was a resounding success. The result of the conference which included 28 countries was the proposal of a world anti-doping charter that proposes among other things harmonization of testing procedures and sanctions and out of competition testing without prior notice.

As a result of this conference, the Government of Canada agreed to head a working group whose mission was to promote the anti-doping charter to other Governments. The IOC under the able leadership of its vice-president, Prince Alexandre de Merode, undertook to promote the charter to the responsible authorities within the international sport community.

Since that first successful world conference the following action has been undertaken. In September of 1988, in the week preceding the Seoul Olympics, I was honoured with an invitation to present the anti-doping charter to the IOC executive committee. The charter was adopted by the IOC at their general meeting and renamed the International Olympic Anti-Doping Charter. The president of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, in his