

Olympic 1976 Act

to help the financing of COJO. We approve, Mr. Speaker, that co-operation as members of the House to enable COJO to finance the Games. We surely hope that the Postmaster General was right when he assured us a while ago that there was no problem at the level of those concerned, at the level of collectors and we also hope that the expectations of the minister will be fulfilled because indeed we must to some extent rely on his word. However, I have much regard for the minister who introduced the bill and I hope that he will constantly check and control to ensure the better-being of every people concerned.

In conclusion, I will say again that we are quite pleased to support the subject matter of the legislation. We had hoped that our amendments would have improved it. Finally, the government did not think so but we hope that the bill in its present form will fulfill the expectations of COJO and will be in the interests of COJO, helping it to serve the participants.

I almost forgot to mention that provincial participation as far as athletes are concerned is quite substantial and from a human point of view, more important than physical facilities.

Therefore, I hope sufficient amounts of money will be earmarked for the good training of these athletes. I said at the second reading stage that it was unfortunate that we did not provide for adequate preparation of our athletes for these Olympic Games.

Of course, nobody ever dreamed 20 years ago of those Olympics being held in Canada. But what are the government's responsibilities in the area beyond such a period? I would pinpoint amateur sport, preparation of athletes, general physical fitness of Canadians. I think that this event will at least make us realize the importance of physical fitness which must be the first priority of anyone wishing for his own satisfaction to stand some day for his country in various competitions. I hope that all this will induce us to make bigger effort to allocate the necessary amounts of money to provide the required facilities not only at the provincial level but also at the regional and local levels. It is in that way that I hope that this historical event for Canada will be a motivation and an unforgettable memory which will be kept in every Canadian's mind and which will lead us, as members of parliament, to do a lot more when we deal not only with Olympics but also with physical fitness for a population which wants itself to be healthy.

● (1550)

[English]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in case there should be others who want to get in a sentence or two before the debate ends at four o'clock, I shall be very brief. I certainly do not intend to indulge in the kind of excitement which was displayed here earlier this afternoon.

It is not because of what is contained in this particular bill that we oppose it. It is, rather, because we want to continue to indicate our opposition to the whole idea of this country spending probably a billion dollars on the Olympics before they are over at a time when there are so many other things which, in our view, should be done as matters of greater priority.

[Mr. La Salle.]

By our opposition to this bill we are continuing to take the position we took in the first place—that Canada should not at this time be hosting the Olympics. That decision has been made, though, and whatever happens to the bill before us will not change the position. Therefore, I do not want to indulge in carping criticism, but the fact of the matter is that costs are rising all the time. However the money is eventually raised, it will come out of the wealth of this country; it is money we are spending on this project instead of on housing or on improving the pensions of older people and veterans. Day after day we are denied requests we make on behalf of such people because the money is not available. We think this was a wrong decision, and for that reason I shall be saying no when the vote on the motion for the third reading of this bill is called.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) is seeking the floor, and since he is the mover of the motion he can speak only if there is unanimous consent. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I should like to thank the hon. members for giving me the opportunity to say a few words. I have not much time, just two or three minutes, but I want to thank the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) for introducing this bill on my behalf. I could not be here, because I was attending the Ministers' Conference in Japan, but the House will agree, I am sure, that I could not have done a better job than the hon. member for Verdun.

Although the bill gave rise to some controversy in the last few days, I am glad that we have reached an agreement and that the bill is now accepted by the House of Commons. As everyone knows, the Federal government's position has always been one of co-operation. We have supported the argument put forward by Mayor Drapeau and the Quebec Premier to the effect that the Olympic Games should be self-supporting and that we would take all necessary steps to make COJO self-supporting.

It is therefore in line with the principle underlying this policy that it was deemed necessary to introduce this twofold bill concerning gold coins on the one hand, and the protection of trade marks on the other, a last minute problem which was settled by the House of Commons. Hon. members will therefore be able to claim that to this day, they have discharged their share of the responsibilities. We want the Olympic Games to be a great success. Some reservations were voiced both during this debate and in committee concerning mechanisms.

Some hon. members, including the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), might indeed suggest that we should assume a greater responsibility. It had been agreed however from the start both by Mayor Drapeau and the Quebec Premier that we should only give them the means necessary for self-financing the Games and that, should there be a deficit, it would be taken care of by the Quebec government and the City of Montreal. And this is understandable, since the assets will remain in the City of