

Adjournment Debate

met if it is at all possible. I throw the challenge to the Minister and offer my support and encouragement in everything he can do in this direction.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order. The Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sports).

Hon. Jacques Olivier (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) for raising the issue on January 25, and I want to take this opportunity to say once again how disappointed we were at Sport Canada about the way our amateur athletes were selected by the Canadian Olympic Association. All I can say is that I have yet to receive an answer to the telegram I sent to Mr. Jackson, in which I urged him to alter his decision and to increase the number of Canadian athletes taking part in the Games at Sarajevo.

Whenever these people need money they come to us and they know where to find us. In the circumstances, I can give the Hon. Member opposite and my colleagues here in the House the assurance that I intend to invite athletes to go to Sarajevo at the expense of the Canadian Government, without the authorization of the National Olympic Committee. We have decided to pay the travel expenses of a group of athletes who will at least be able to see what the Olympics are like.

Mr. Speaker, I feel our Canadian Olympic Association has lost a golden opportunity to give promising young talent a chance to get experience by going to Sarajevo. I fail to understand why Mr. Jackson and his friends have turned down requests from myself, my provincial colleagues and my colleagues here in the House to revise their list. It is not a matter of money, because if that were the case, Mr. Jackson would have come knocking on our door, as usual. We give these people an average of \$1.5 million, and they know how to go about getting the money. Mr. Speaker, through the Chair I can advise the Canadian Olympic Association today that we are going to review the agreement signed between the Canadian Government, my Department and the Canadian Olympic Association, so that in future, we can have the assurance that promising young Canadian talent will be able to participate and acquire experience for the Olympics. Winning medals is a goal, but taking part in Olympic Games is a reward for our young Canadian athletes who have been training every day for two, three, four or five hours in an attempt to make it to the top.

We are not interested in winning every single Olympic medal. What we want is to reward our young amateur athletes who had the courage to train day in and day out, and to commend the parents of those young athletes. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that my Department is firmly committed, first to review our agreement with the Canadian Olympic Association and, second, since we have had no reply from Mr. Jackson,

upon recommendation by my officials, to invite two young athletes to go and see for themselves what goes on at Sarajevo, and to have their expenses paid by the Canadian taxpayers.

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE—FINDING OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN DEPARTMENT

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to address the issue of a sexual harassment case in the Department of National Defence. When I raised the issue with the Minister I was very surprised that he did not know about the case, and seemed to be perplexed as to which case it was, as if there had been many cases. In fact, it is the Robichaud case, of which I am sure he has been made aware. It is a very serious case. It is one in which the Department's conduct has been shameful.

● (1820)

The facts are these, A Human Rights Commission Review Tribunal, a three-person tribunal, on February 21, 1983 allowed an appeal in this case. It made a finding that the supervisor of the woman concerned, a Mr. Brennan, was guilty of sexual harassment by reason of his failure to rebut the *prima facie* case established by Mrs. Robichaud, and by his creation of a poisoned work environment. Both of these are, of course, contrary to the Canadian Human Rights Act, Section 7(b).

What I want to address is the procedure and the action by the Department of Defence, or the non-action in some cases. The review tribunal pointed out that there was no clearly defined policy against sexual harassment to be communicated to the employees. When complaints were brought to the attention of Mr. Brennan's superiors, no investigation was conducted by the Department to determine the truth or otherwise of the allegations. Let me quote from the decision of the review tribunal:

On the contrary, steps were taken to remove Mrs. Robichaud from the normal routine of a lead hand. She was ultimately transferred to the so-called "punishment block" on the barracks where her duties were severely curtailed. This treatment of Mrs. Robichaud would give the impression to the other employees on the base that she had fallen out of favour with the people in charge of personnel. There was certainly no indication that Mr. Brennan was disfavoured. There was the orchestrated attempt to discredit Mrs. Robichaud after she had filed her complaint by the flood of letters and petitions against her, a circumstance which should have prompted great suspicion and therefore closer inquiry. Finally, we find particularly irresponsible on the part of the employer that the activities of Mr. Brennan in relation to the personnel who were called to testify before the tribunal were not monitored so as to prevent any coercion or intimidation of them by Mr. Brennan.

Evidence was presented that an employee who testified on behalf of Mr. Brennan was given a night off with pay, while another worker who testified against him received a penalty in the form of a shift change. Clearly these are very serious matters, and clearly it is the responsibility of the Department of National Defence to do something about them. The Department was negligent in not dealing promptly and firmly with this matter. It goes back a very long time to 1979.