

Olympic Financing

Mr. Towers: The minister in charge of the Wheat Board is also the minister in the department of so-called justice, and sometimes I wonder just where the justice is when he tries to deal with issues before the House. When he talks about such things as branch lines and what have you, I wonder where is the justice in this land of Canada of which we are all so proud.

The fact of the matter is that all Canadians, regardless of where they live, are proud to be Canadians. When we invite other people to come to our land, we want them to receive that courtesy that Canadians have given in the past and are able to give today. Those of us in western Canada in particular have had our tongue in our cheek for a long time now in regard to the way COJO has been operating, but the time has now come to try to get a little more honesty into the program if it is going to be successful.

One of the prime, fundamental principles of sport is the recognition of honesty for what it is and for what it stands. Those of us who have participated in sports recognize that there are judges, that there are referees and that there are organizations to ensure that the principle of honesty is adhered to. Certainly it is a sad commentary to say that members of the House of Commons find there are misgivings on the part of many Canadians due to the fact that this project, right from the very beginning, has been mishandled. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the mayor of Montreal are probably two of the smartest politicians in Canada today. The fact that because people are smart politicians does not mean to say that they are honest politicians creates a great many doubts in the minds of the Canadian people. Certainly there were rumours that COJO or the Olympic Committee—

● (2010)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): I have been waiting for the hon. member to come to the amendment which is now being debated which has to do specifically with the amount of gold contained in the Olympic coin. The motion before the House is Motion No. 1 in the name of the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens).

Mr. Towers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize the fact that the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) and perhaps other members of that side do not understand what I am talking about when I am talking about honesty.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) said he had his tongue in his cheek. I feel from the way he is speaking that he has his foot in his mouth instead.

Mr. Towers: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for St. Boniface would dare come to the riding of Red Deer he would find who has his foot in his mouth. Perhaps he would get a foot in another part of his anatomy. The fact of the matter is that we are talking about what is honest and what is dishonest. Apparently there are certain members in this House who do not recognize the difference between the two. That is the reason why this amendment is of such fundamental importance not only to the House of Commons but to all Canadians. What is a person who buys one of these lesser value coins going to think when he finds that he has bought a coin of lesser value than he

[Mr. Lang.]

had anticipated? This is the problem which we are correcting in this amendment.

We are trying to bring a certain amount of rationalism into this bill. I feel sorry for the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey). He probably has been handed one of the worst messes that has ever been handed to any minister of this House in the past decade, because of the fact that his predecessor got not only the cabinet but this House of Commons into a horrendous situation when this House of Commons was promised that the Olympics would not cost the Canadian people one red cent.

We find that the postage stamps and silver coins, which it was estimated would bring in \$250 million, are bringing in only about \$20 million. So now the Postmaster General is trying to retrieve a certain element of success. Certainly we all agree with him that this is a Canadian project and that the time has now come when the cabinet, and especially this House of Commons, must be honest and forthright with the Canadian people.

We might consider the situation in respect of visitors from abroad. They may buy a coin which they consider to be worth \$100, only to find that it is worth half the amount they originally anticipated. Is this in the best interests of Canada and the esteem with which Canada is held in the world? Certainly I believe the time has arrived when we must recognize that the government must be forthright with the Canadian people. We must tell the Canadians that security, immigration, and other facets of the Olympics will cost them approximately \$140 million. The government has never said how much has been put into this project by CMHC. This is one of the problems with which we must deal. This is why there is such an element of mistrust in the minds of the Canadian people. We must realize that no one can be proud of the project when there is this element of mistrust in the minds of everyone in respect of those who are promoting the Olympics.

As I have said, I feel sorry for the Postmaster General in the horrendous task he has before him in his position as Postmaster General, responsible for trying to retrieve a certain amount of status and a certain element of understanding in respect of this chaotic situation which has developed through three people, his predecessor the former postmaster general, the Prime Minister, and the mayor of Montreal. It is a shame that these three could get not only this House of Commons but the Canadian people in such a tumultuous and chaotic situation.

I hope members opposite would try to put themselves in a position where they would say to themselves, to this country, and to all Canadians, that they have made a mistake, that perhaps they have misled the people a great deal in the past, but that the time has now arrived when from here on in they will do all in their power to correct the situation. Certainly I am sure this would be a change for the cabinet and for the member for St. Boniface. It would certainly be a change for the hon. member for St. Boniface. Nevertheless I think the time has now come when the cabinet and this House of Commons must be honest and straightforward with the Canadian people so that COJO will be a success, and so that the Olympics will achieve the status which each and every Canadian would like to see them achieve.