

KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING: CANADA'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2014 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES IN SOCHI

Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Gordon Brown Chair

FEBRUARY 2014
41st PARLIAMENT, SECOND SESSION

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has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied Canada's Preparations for the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi and has agreed to report the following:

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi

In 2007, Sochi, Russia was elected by the International Olympic Committee to host the XXII Olympic Winter Games in 2014.¹ They will take place from 7 to 23 February and the Paralympic Winter Games will take place from 7 to 16 March.

Sochi is a city of 400,000 people located on the shores of the Black Sea, about 1,600 km south of Moscow. Despite its sub-tropical location, snow-capped mountains are located nearby.

The 2014 Olympic Winter Games will include events in 15 disciplines of seven winter sports:

- Biathlon
- Bobsleigh (bobsleigh and skeleton)
- Curling
- Ice hockey
- Luge
- Skating (figure skating, short track speed skating and speed skating)
- Skiing (alpine, cross country, Nordic combined, ski jumping, freestyle and snowboard)²

The 2014 Paralympic Winter Games will include events in five winter sports:

 Alpine skiing (downhill, slalom, giant slalom, Super-G, super combined, team events and snowboard)

¹ The Olympic Movement, "Sochi 2014".

Organizing Committee of the XXII Olympic Winter Games and XI Paralympic Winter Games 2014 in <u>Sochi</u>, "Olympic Games Sochi 2014."

- Biathlon
- Cross-country skiing
- Ice sledge hockey
- Wheelchair curling ³

Canada is expecting to send more than 215 athletes and 90 coaches to the Olympic Winter Games⁴ and about 50 athletes to the Paralympic Winter Games.⁵

1.2 Committee Mandate

On 19 November 2013, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage (the Committee) agreed,

That the Committee undertake a study of Team Canada's preparations, as well as the Government of Canada's investments, in the lead up to the Sochi Olympic and Paralympic Games.⁶

The Committee held five meetings on the study, during which it heard from 29 witnesses.

1.3 The Committee's Report

Chapter 2 of this report looks at the investments by the Government of Canada in the lead-up to the Games. Chapter 3 examines Canada's preparations for the Games and Chapter 4 looks at Canada's strategic approach. In Chapter 5, the Committee presents its observations and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: FUNDING

2.1 Federal support for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi

The Government of Canada is the largest contributor to Canada's sports system. In his appearance before the Committee, Bal Gosal, Minister of State (Sport), said

Organizing Committee of the XXII Olympic Winter Games and XI Paralympic Winter Games 2014 in <u>Sochi</u>, "Paralympics."

⁴ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0910.

⁵ Canadian Paralympic Committee, "<u>The Canadian Paralympic Committee leads Media Consortium creating unprecedented broadcast coverage of Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games</u>," News Release, 27 November 2013.

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013.

that the Government of Canada supports Canadian athletes through three Sport Canada programs.

The Sport Support Program (SSP) is the main funding mechanism for Canada's national sports organizations, sports centres and multisport service organizations. In particular, the SSP funds the Own the Podium (OTP) initiative, which helps "our athletes fulfill their Olympic and Paralympic dreams."

Sport Canada also supports athletes directly through the Athlete Assistance Program, which helps to cover living expenses, training and tuition.

Lastly, the Hosting Program provides indirect financial support through the construction and renovation of the country's sports infrastructure. Minister of State Gosal reminded the Committee that Canada built "international-level facilities" during the 1988 Olympic Games in Calgary and the 2010 Games in Vancouver. Some of the athletes participating in the Sochi Games had access to the high-quality sports facilities built for these two events.

He also highlighted the close cooperation between Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC). The latter two organizations are responsible for coordinating various aspects of Canada's participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi.

Karen O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer of the CPC, told the Committee that the Vancouver Paralympic Games were a "catalyst" for Paralympic sport in Canada and that increased funding for Paralympic athletes was one of the outcomes of the games.

Anti-doping efforts provide another good example of the partnership between Sport Canada, the COC and the CPC. In November 2013, they announced additional funding of close to \$1 million for the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), to expand research into doping in sports.¹⁰

Anne Merklinger, OTP Chief Executive Officer, also emphasized the federal government's critical role in high-performance sport:

the Government of Canada is the single largest contributor to excellence in sport in Canada, and it is the primary reason why Canada's athletes and coaches have enjoyed the successes they have to this point on the world stage. 11

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Find the Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0855.

⁸ Ibid., 0905.

⁹ Ibid., 0950.

¹⁰ CCES, Intelligence-based anti-doping efforts in Canada receive a major boost in funding, 5 November 2013.

¹¹ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 1000.

Ms. Merklinger pointed out that OTP received an additional \$10 million in the four years leading up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi. She stated that OTP is very confident it has fulfilled its mandate to ensure that athletes, coaches and support staff are prepared and can perform to their best at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Minister of State Gosal estimated that the federal government has invested "over \$153 million into winter sport over the last four-year winter sport cycle." He said this funding represents "an increase of over \$25 million, or a 20% increase" over the four-year cycle leading up to the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games.

2.2 Provincial and private-sector funding

Most of the witnesses testified that the Government of Canada is the key source of funding for high-performance sport in Canada. However, athletes' success in Sochi also depends on the involvement of the provincial governments and the private sector.

Marcel Aubut, President of the COC, pointed out that the COC "is the most significant source of private funding for high-performance sports in the country" and that "continued strong and stable government and private sector funding are critical to our success today, tomorrow, and well into the future."

Stephen Norris, Vice-President of Sport at Winsport, the Winter Sport Institute in Calgary, concurs with this view. He stated that the federal government could play a leadership role in encouraging corporate Canada "to become a lot more involved." Tim Farstad, Executive Director of the Canadian Luge Association, suggested that the federal government create tax incentives for businesses that support high-performance athletes. 19

JD Miller, President of B2ten, would also like to see greater financial support from the private sector to help athletes train and prepare.²⁰ This cooperation is critical if Canada wants "to remain a leading medal contender in winter sports."²¹ Steven Hills, Executive

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12 Ibid.
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13 Ibid., 1025.

14 Ibid., 0855.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 0910.

17 Ibid

18 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1025.

19 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 1040.

20 Ibid., 0905.

21 Ibid.

Director of the Canada Snowboard Federation, shares this perspective and stated that more funding will be required to "keep the momentum going" after the Sochi Games.

Duncan Fulton, Senior Vice-President, Communications and Corporate Affairs, Canadian Tire Corporation, explained that the private sector gets involved in amateur sport for two reasons. First, there is a desire to be associated with great athletes and an international event like the Olympic Games. Second, companies have a sense of social responsibility toward the community.

Mr. Fulton said that Canada needs to shine the spotlight on our athletes, explaining that there are many success stories to be told. He believes the federal government and the private sector could do more to promote the achievements of Canadian athletes (in addition to those during the Olympic Games).²³

A number of witnesses emphasized the need to create a pool of promising athletes by increasing young people's physical literacy. Officials from the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association, ²⁴ Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton²⁵ and Ski Jumping Canada²⁶ expressed concerns about developing the next generation of athletes in their respective sports.

Some witnesses called for greater provincial involvement in sports. Mr. Fulton stated that Canada's success at the Olympic Games starts by encouraging children and youth to lead healthy and active lives.²⁷ Mr. Hills of the Canada Snowboard Federation commented on the advantage of federal-provincial bilateral agreements to promote physical literacy and support high-performance sports. He stated that such agreements are already in place with Quebec and British Columbia.²⁸

Mr. Miller of B2ten also believes that some provinces must do more to advance sport. He said that all the parties involved in sport must come to the table to identify the objectives we want to achieve as a country.²⁹

23 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 6, 28 November 2013, 0955.

27 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 6, 28 November 2013, 0955.

²² Ibid., 0925.

²⁴ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0905.

²⁵ Ibid., 0910.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁸ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0925.

²⁹ Ibid., 0930.

CHAPTER 3: CANADA'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2014 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES IN SOCHI

3.1 Canada's past performance and goals for the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

At the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, Canada had its best results ever, finishing third overall with a total of 26 medals. This was the greatest number of medals ever won by a country at a single winter Games and, as pointed out by Minister of State Gosal, included a record 14 gold medals.³⁰

At the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Games Canadian athletes also did very well. According to Ms. O'Neill, of the CPC, the Games, "were Canada's best ever winter Games in history as Canada placed third in the gold medal count with 10 gold medals and 19 medals overall." ³¹

At the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi, Mr. Aubut of the COC said Canada is hoping to become the first host nation to win more medals in the next Games, something that has never been done before. In the Olympic Winter Games, Ms. Merklinger of OTP said Canada's goal is to place number one in the Olympic medal count. In the Paralympic Winter Games, Canada aims to finish in the top three in the gold medal count.

Ms. Merklinger was relatively optimistic about the chances of Canada attaining its goals. She noted that during competition in 2013, Canada's athletes won 29 medals in Olympic events, placing Canada in a tie for second place overall. In Paralympic sports, Canada finished fourth overall based on its gold medal ranking.³⁴

3.2 Support for the athletes

As pointed out by Mr. Aubut of the COC, Canada will have competition for the top spot in the medal count. He said, "It's not necessarily the best athlete who wins, but often the athlete who is most prepared to compete and win in the Olympic environment." To help them become prepared, Mr. Aubut said that the people supporting the athletes "have been working for the last five years to leave no stone unturned...."

32 Ibid.,0910.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 0910.

36 Ibid.

³⁰ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0855.

³¹ Ibid., 0950.

³³ Ibid., 1000.

Mr. Aubut said that as part of the preparation, athletes have been taken to Sochi on familiarization visits. In addition, three million dollars' worth of Canadian products and equipment has been shipped to Sochi. Athletes have also been prepared for the media attention.³⁷

Ms. O'Neill of the CPC said the Paralympic team has benefited from increased funding, which has enabled it to have, "an increased number of training camps, augmented support for our coaches, increased competitive opportunities, augmentation to equipment and technical expertise for sport medicine and science." ³⁸

Mental preparation plays a large role in the lead-up to the Games. Ms. Merklinger of OTP described what is involved:

Around each athlete there is a very specific, well-trained team, and that team will include what we call a sports psychologist or a mental performance consultant. That specialist will work with a national sport organization and a particular athlete or team in the full preparation through to the Games. That sport psychologist or mental performance consultant will go to Sochi. They'll be familiar with the environment. They'll develop a customized approach for each athlete as they prepare for the games.³⁹

In the Olympic Village, Canadian athletes will have access to a preparation and recovery area, a health and science clinic, video analysis technology and a gymnasium. ⁴⁰ Paralympic athletes will also have access to software that provides immediate analysis of a performance so that it can be reviewed by sport medicine experts and coaches. If necessary, adjustments can be made for the next event. ⁴¹ In order to reduce the distractions for the athletes, there will be separate facilities at the Olympic Village for corporate partners, family and friends. ⁴²

Some witnesses said that travelling to Sochi can be a challenge. Ms. O'Neill of the CPC said that it was working with Air Canada to reduce the travel time. ⁴³ Don Wilson of Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton noted there had been some difficulty in obtaining visas for athletes and their families. ⁴⁴

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37 Ibid., 0915.
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38 Ibid., 0950.

39 Ibid., 1030.

40 Ibid., 0915-0920.

41 Ibid., 0955.

42 Ibid., 0915-0920.

43 Ibid., 1025.

44 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0915.

Regarding the support athletes can expect if they sustain an injury, Mr. Wilson said the COC has checked out the medical facilities and that he is confident that medical support will be excellent.⁴⁵

The Committee heard testimony about the advances in athlete preparation from Elizabeth Manley-Theobald, winner of the silver medal in figure skating at the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in Calgary. She said that at that time athletes tended to train in isolation, and she described how preparations are different today:

Today's athletes have more competitions, more expectations, and also an incredible team working with them. I've seen in the past few years how Skate Canada, with its high-performance camp at the start of each season, helps our athletes be fully prepared for their international assignments. It also builds a great team spirit. As well, the skaters have access to tremendous wealth and knowledge in the sports science field, nutrition, and sport-specific training, which was really lacking in my day. They are the best prepared team we've ever had.⁴⁶

3.3 Athlete and Visitor Security

Canadian organizers are addressing concerns related to the Russian legislation banning the promotion of homosexuality. Minister of State Gosal testified:

The Government of Canada has raised concerns directly with Russian authorities on this. We are working and we all know the protection and promotion of human rights is a hallmark of Canadian foreign policy. We are very pro-active. 47

He went on to say that Canadian consular officials would be in Sochi to help Canadians with any issues that arise. ⁴⁸ Mr. Aubut added that the International Olympic Committee is dealing with the Russian government to ensure that the legislation has no impact on Canadian athletes and visitors. ⁴⁹

In a letter that was tabled with the Committee, John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Lynne Yelich, Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), wrote:

As with all Olympic Games in the past, both summer and winter, we have already taken steps to increase the number of staff on the ground in Russia that can provide consular assistance to all Canadians. Special consular contingency plans to address any issues

46 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 1000.

47 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0920.

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⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 0925.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

regarding Canadian sexual minorities have been planned for some time in Sochi, Moscow, and Ottawa. 50

With regard to security, Peter Judge Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association said that the Canadian security detail has things well in hand and has a good relationship with their Russian counterparts.⁵¹

3.4 Anti-doping

Witness testimony also touched on the anti-doping preparations. Minister of State Gosal testified that the federal government is spending nearly \$6 million to support the CCES in 2013-2014. He noted that the federal government had provided an additional \$400,000 to fund extra testing leading up to Sochi. Mr. Aubut said that for the first time, every single athlete will be subject to doping controls before leaving Canada. The state of State Gosal testified that the federal government had provided an additional state of the first time, every single athlete will be subject to doping controls before leaving Canada.

Doug MacQuarrie, Chief Operating Officer of the CCES, informed the Committee of recent events, including reports by the Canadian Border Services Agency that steroids are now the second-most confiscated drug. In terms of contemporary approaches, the CCES is increasing its anti-doping education efforts with athletes. It is also gathering intelligence and using a program to locate athletes at any time for unannounced testing. In addition, it is using a system that develops a unique blood profile for each athlete. As well, it has set up an anonymous hotline for reporting suspected doping.⁵⁴

Specific actions related to the Sochi Games include maintaining close contact with the COC and CPC and setting up an e-learning platform with specific information for athletes. All athletes will be tested at least once in the four months preceding the games.⁵⁵

As far as doping risks are concerned, athletes face the risk of inadvertent doping from contaminated supplements. The CCES also faces what it calls a "dearth of cooperation with Canadian law enforcement." For example, Mr. MacQuarrie said that intelligence regarding the confiscation of steroids is not being shared.⁵⁶

John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Lynne Yelich, Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), Letter to Mr. Paul Dewar, M.P., Mr. Matthew Dubé, M.P. and Mr. Randall Garrison, M.P. (Re: The safety of Canadian athletes or spectators attending the 22nd Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia), 12 November 2013.

⁵¹ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0915.

⁵² Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0900.

⁵³ Ibid., 0910.

⁵⁴ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 6, 28 November 2013, 0950.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 0950-0955.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 0955.

Regarding federal government involvement, Mr. MacQuarrie said that additional funding would allow the CCES to enhance its activities in the areas of intelligence, investigation and the development of strategies.⁵⁷ In addition to the need for resources, he said that the regulatory and legislative environment needs to be examined to address the restrictions on the sharing of information between law enforcement agencies.⁵⁸

3.5 Sport and compliance with the *Official Languages Act*

The Committee examined the ability of national sports organizations and Canadian multisport service organizations to offer services in an athlete's official language. In addition, several witnesses raised the issue of broadcasting the Sochi Olympic Games in Canada.

Minister of State Gosal reiterated the federal government's commitment to official languages. He stated that CBC/Radio-Canada will broadcast the Sochi Olympic Games in English and French.⁵⁹

The President of the COC, Mr. Aubut, pointed out that French is one of the official languages of the international Olympic movement. He assured Committee members that the COC team would defend the *Official Languages Act* in Sochi, and give English and French equal treatment.⁶⁰ Martin Richard, Executive Director of Communications and Marketing for the CPC, stated that all athletes would be "served in the language of their choice."⁶¹

Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, expects that Canadian athletes and their families and coaches will receive services in English and French from the COC and its representatives in Sochi. He believes Canada's official language expertise needs to be transferred to Sochi. Like Minister of State Gosal, Mr. Fraser is pleased that the Sochi Olympic Winter Games will be broadcast by CBC/Radio-Canada. 63

Officials from various organizations also touched on the subject of serving athletes and coaches in English and French. Dale Henwood, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Sport Institute Calgary, stated that his organization provided a range of support services to athletes in both official languages.⁶⁴ Mr. Norris explained that WinSport

ibia., 1013.

⁵⁷ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 6, 28 November 2013, 1010.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1015.

⁵⁹ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0935.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 0930.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1030.

⁶² Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 6, 28 November 2013, 1020.

⁶³ Ibid., 0945.

⁶⁴ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1015.

goes to "very clear lengths" to ensure that French-speaking athletes "have the level of care and attention that any other athlete has." 66 The representative from Speed Skating Canada emphasized that the organization is "vigilant" about compliance with the Official Languages Act. 67

3.6 Media and social media

Arranging media coverage is an important part of the preparations for the Games. To appreciate the importance of this coverage, Lane MacAdam, Director of Sport Excellence at Sport Canada, reminded the Committee that, "the gold-medal hockey game during the Vancouver Olympic Games was the most-watched television broadcast in Canadian history."

In the past, however, the Paralympic Games have received much less media coverage. To avoid this happening again, Ms. O'Neill of the CPC explained: "We've bought the rights, we've created a media consortium, and we are going to have unprecedented coverage here in Canada...." Mr. Richard of the CPC, elaborated:

One of our strategies is to ensure that our athletes are known before they show up in Sochi. Of course, in order to ensure that Canadians are able to watch the Paralympic Games, we have to plan to have over 65 hours of content for Sochi for our Canadians and over 350 hours on digital platforms. 70

With regard to ways in which Canadians will be able to follow their athletes, Dimitri Soudas, then Executive Director of Communications for the COC, talked about the use of social media platforms to allow Canadians to engage and interact with the athletes. He noted that two years ago, the COC had roughly 4,000 followers on Twitter and that now it has nearly 40,000 followers.⁷¹ Likewise, the CPC is encouraging its athletes to use social media to share their experiences and to communicate directly with Canadians.⁷²

3.7 Individual Sports

During the course of the Committee's study, officials from a number of individual sports organizations shared information about their preparations for the Sochi Games and for the long-term success of their sport.

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Ibid., 1020.
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          lbid.
          Evidence, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0905.
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          Evidence, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0905.
68
          Ibid., 1015.
69
70
          Ibid., 1020
71
          Ibid., 0935.
72
          Ibid., 1035.
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Christopher Lindsay, High Performance Director with Biathlon Canada, said that its goal is to place an athlete on the podium. In preparing for the Sochi Games, Biathlon Canada benefited from an investment from OTP and WinSport to obtain its own specialized treadmill. In addition, OTP supported the development of a biathlon shooting lab. He also talked about the reduction in funding to the sport of biathlon, which he said increases costs to the athletes and makes it difficult to target the next generation of athletes.

Mr. Hills of the Canada Snowboard Federation, said its goal is to win five medals. In the Paralympic Games, where snowboarding is making its debut, Mr. Hills said it will be difficult to win a medal because of the level of disability of the athlete is not being taken into account. To prepare for the Games, with help from the federal government, Canada hosted the World Championships. The Canada Snowboard Federation also held a summer training camp and built replica courses. Visits were also made to the Sochi site. To

lan Moss, Chief Executive Officer of Speed Skating Canada, said he was confident that a full team would qualify for the Sochi Games, meaning that three athletes would compete in the short-track and long-track competitions and in the team pursuit.⁷⁸

Daniel Thompson, Chief Executive Officer of Skate Canada, said that Canada had qualified the largest figure skating team of any country. Thanks to federal government funding, the athletes have trained full-time and have had access to high-quality facilities and coaching.⁷⁹

Mr. Farstad of the Canadian Luge Association said that the efforts to help athletes perform at their best included placing a Russian coach on the team and becoming familiar with the Sochi track.⁸⁰ He also identified a number of challenges, including the lack of night training and the need to find a place to tune the equipment.⁸¹

Mr. Wilson of Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton said his organization receives about 85% of its operating funds from Sport Canada, OTP and the COC. The rest comes from corporate Canada. Given the very slim margins of victory, he said that preparation is the key to victory on the podium. As an example, he said that OTP had invested over one

⁷³ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0845.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 0850.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 0855.

⁷⁸ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0950.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 0955.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1010.

million dollars into bobsleigh development. The federal government's investment in facilities has also facilitated the development of Olympic champions.⁸²

Mr. Judge of the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association said that its 26 athletes all have medal potential. Despite lacking home advantage, he said the athletes are preparing better than ever, thanks in part to familiarization visits to the Sochi site.⁸³

Curtis Lyon, Chairman of Ski Jumping Canada, said that great strides had been made in the areas of integrated support teams, technology, increased collaboration with other sports and partnerships with the Canadian Sport Institute. He applauded the federal government's investment over the past four years, but noted that continued investment is needed to ensure future success. He mentioned that support for women's ski jumping had decreased. He also said that as a volunteer-run organization, Ski Jumping Canada's capacity to seek private funding is limited.⁸⁴

3.8 Readiness for the Sochi Games

Asked about the state of the athletes' preparations for the Sochi Games, Mr. Miller of B2ten replied, "The cake is baked," meaning that everything that can be done has been done. Mr. Hills concurred, saying that they were as prepared as they possibly could be. Messrs. Farstad, Moss, Thompson, Vilson, Judge and Lyon also said that, with the exception of a few details, everything was in place for the Games. 88

When asked what else could be done, Caroline Assalian, Chief Sport Officer for the COC replied that Canadians can show their support for the athletes. She said the athletes "feel the support when Canadians are cheering or sending them messages or supporting them."

CHAPTER 4: CANADA'S STRATEGIC APPROACH

4.1 The strategic approach to success on the podium

A number of witnesses pointed out that the difference between winning a medal and not making the podium can be a matter of milliseconds. Mr. Henwood of the Canadian

84 Ibid., 0855.

87 Ibid., 1030.

88 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0915.

89 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0930.

⁸² Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0845.

⁸³ Ibid., 0850.

⁸⁵ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0925.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Sport Institute Calgary referred to this as "the margin of victory" and point out that at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, Jon Montgomery won gold in skeleton by seven one-hundredths of a second. 90

To address the slim margin of victory that is needed to reach the podium, Canada has developed a strategic approach that targets athletes with the best chances of winning. This approach is coordinated by Own the Podium (OTP), which is a partnership between Sport Canada, the COC and the CPC. OTP is an advisory body that "makes recommendations to the funding partners on close to \$70 million in existing funding from government and non-government sources to support winter and summer sport excellence in Olympic and Paralympic sports." ⁹¹

Ms. Merklinger of OTP said its strategy is based on having access to three key ingredients. The first is the world's best coaches and technical leaders. The second is a great daily training and competition environment. The third is quality sport-science and sport-medicine support. After the Games are over, OTP will analyze the results to evaluate its investment strategy. ⁹²

To keep the momentum going immediately following the Sochi Games, Mr. Hills of the Canada Snowboard Federation said that funding will be required and that supporting high-performance sport is becoming increasingly expensive. ⁹³

Over the longer term, some witnesses called for a review of the strategic approach. Mr. Hills suggested looking at an eight-year model of development rather than a four-year one. ⁹⁴ Mr. Norris of WinSport said the challenge is to ensure a sustainable business model. He said:

I would urge us as a country, particularly the leading agencies, Own the Podium and the Canadian Olympic Committee, to understand the need to be a lean, mean, high-performance machine, whereby we are extremely effective and efficient at the top level and really invest in our coaches, in our high-performance advisers, and obviously in the support personnel: our sport medicine physicians, our sport scientists, our psychologists, and our performance analysts.⁹⁵

92 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 1000-1005.

95 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1000.

⁹⁰ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 0945.

⁹¹ Department of Canadian Heritage, "Own the Podium."

⁹³ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0925.

⁹⁴ Ibid

Mr. Wilson of Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton said it was essential to support the Canadian coaching program, saying it needs to be made up of "people who stay here, believe in the country, and want to see the next generation go through." ⁹⁶

Mr. Miller of B2ten said that a number of questions need to be addressed, including determining what sports are most important to Canadians, what Canada's goals should be and what measures should be used to evaluate the results. ⁹⁷ He said it is fundamental that all stakeholders move with common purpose, that they know what the objectives are. ⁹⁸

Mr. Lindsay of Biathlon Canada pointed out that the current funding model is based on two things: general participation across the country and high-performance success. ⁹⁹ Mr. Hills felt that money should continue to be invested in high-performance preparation, but also in the development of youth. ¹⁰⁰ Mr. Norris said that the strategy should include three elements: "quality people, sound instruction, and strong governance to make sure we do not duplicate services and that we're very efficient." ¹⁰¹

4.2 Sport Centres and Training Facilities

One of the partners in Canada's strategic approach is the Canadian Sport Institute Calgary. Part of a network of seven such centres across Canada, the Canadian Sport Institute Calgary works with about 525 athletes, 300 of which are of national team caliber. Since its establishment in 1994, it has contributed to more than 400 Olympic, Paralympic and world championship medals. ¹⁰²

The Canadian Sport Institute Calgary prepares athletes through the delivery of services in areas such as exercise physiology, biomechanics, sport medicine, nutrition and strength and conditioning. These, said Mr. Henwood, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Sport Institute, are aimed at providing "Canadian athletes with that critical margin of victory." 103

99 Ibid., 0920.

100 Ibid., 0925.

103 Ibid., 0950.

⁹⁶ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0920.

⁹⁷ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0950.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 0930.

¹⁰¹ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1035.

¹⁰² Ibid., 0945.

The Committee also heard testimony from Barry Heck, President and Chief Executive Officer of WinSport, as well as Mr. Norris of WinSport. WinSport operates the facilities that were built for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games. 104

Mr. Norris talked about the benefits of having a high-performance training facility in Canada. He noted that the speed skating team used to train in the Netherlands. 105 Mr. Henwood added that the facilities act as a catalyst: "Once you have the facilities, then I think we've been able to bring in the people, meaning the science and medicine personnel, attract the athletes and coaches from across the country to use those facilities." 106 He also described an innovative process known as "Frozen Thunder", in which snow was buried at the end of the winter season and brought out in early October, giving Canadian athletes the earliest on-snow training in the world. 107 As well, WinSport has built an indoor start facility for bobsleigh, skeleton and luge. 108

At the same time, Mr. Heck pointed out that, in order to remain a world-leading institute, ongoing investments are needed to maintain older facilities and to build new ones: "We have a bobsleigh track that needs to be refurbished and refreshed. It's 25 years old. It's still very good but it's near its end of life." 109

4.3 Athlete recruitment, development and retention

A number of witnesses pointed out that maintaining the momentum of the strategic approach to podium success depends on having a pool of athletes from which to draw. To quote Mr. Judge of the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association, "In order for us to have long-term success and have a deeper body of success, we need to have more athletes in the system."110

As pointed out by Mr. Lindsay of Biathlon Canada, "planning to be able to get results at an Olympic games has to start 12 and eight years out." 11 Ms. Merklinger of OTP also noted: "We need to invest a little bit deeper in that next-generation athlete, so there are performance objectives established eight years out as well."112 Mr. Wilson of Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton said that in order to recruit athletes for the sport of skeleton and to

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104
         Ibid., 0955.
105
         Ibid.
         Ibid., 1030.
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106

107 Ibid., 0955.

Ibid., 1000. 108 Ibid., 1035. 109

Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0920. 110

Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0925. 111

Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 1035. 112

develop them for 8 to 12 years, OTP and Sport Canada need to fund programs at lower levels than the elite level. 113

To quote Ms. O'Neill of the CPC, who hopes to increase participation rates among individuals with a disability from 3% to 6%,¹¹⁴ "For Canada to be world leaders in Paralympic sport we must continue to invest in the critical areas of athlete recruitment, athlete development, and athlete retention, as well as supporting the fundamental leadership of our coaches...."¹¹⁵

One of the challenges in this regard is that while athletes enjoy public attention during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, attention tends to shift away once the Games are over. To quote Mr. Norris of WinSport,

To really have a high performance model, we need to have greater stability, if you like, in terms of everything: the resources that are applied, the attention to the athletes, the understanding of the process they're going through, because it is a long-term process, not a short-term one. 116

As part of the approach to retaining athletes, Ms. Assalian of the COC said there is a transition program to assist with athletes who do not qualify for the Canadian team or those who do not have their best performance at the Sochi Games. She said "we need to make sure they stay motivated for next time."

In her testimony, Katie Weatherston, who won an Olympic gold in 2006 when she was a member of the women's ice hockey team, said that the two best ways of supporting athletes are to provide money to enable them to train full time and to provide better medical coverage to deal with the many injuries athletes sustain while training. She also talked about the difficulties she experienced when her hockey career ended, such as the lack of medical coverage in retirement. Robert Zamuner, Divisional Player Representative with the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA), agreed that the transition can be difficult.

Ms. Weatherston told the Committee about the concussion that ended her career and said that there needs to be better understanding of concussions. ¹²¹ Mr. Zamuner said

116 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1020.

120 Ibid., 1020.

121 Ibid., 0950.

¹¹³ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0910.

¹¹⁴ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 1040.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 0950.

¹¹⁷ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 3, 19 November 2013, 0940.

¹¹⁸ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0940.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

that awareness is growing at the lower levels of hockey, where hitting is not allowed until the Bantam level. 122

Ms. Manley-Theobald, the Olympic medalist, talked about her participation in coaching after her Olympic career had ended. Whereas in the 1980s, when the focus was on winning a medal, she said that today there are careers for athletes. She became a professional coach at the grassroots level, and she described how she inspires young people by teaching them that, "[i]f you can learn from the bumps and bruises as a youngster and realize 'just get back up and it's going to be okay', you can bring that into your adult life, into the business world, into whatever you may achieve." She went on to say: "I think a lot of our professional coaches, with this new strategic planning that we're doing in our sport, are trying to gain that passion out of the kids, so they will stay in sport...."

With regard to the balance of programming for men and women, Mr. Henwood of the Canadian Sport Institute Calgary noted that in Canada's medal performances, women are outperforming men. Mr. Miller of B2ten concurred, saying that women are winning the majority of medals in elite competition. 127

4.4 The Strategic Approach to Funding

To increase the pool of athletes and to assist with the costs of training, witnesses made a number of suggestions with respect to funding. Mr. Henwood expressed the views of a number of witnesses when he called on the federal government,

...to encourage our provinces. I think municipalities and provinces have a role to play in some of that stuff. Encourage them to keep investing, because from a succession planning standpoint, we need to go deeper down the development system and start working with those athletes at a younger age and prepare them to be future national team athletes, if that's their desire and if they have the ability. Today we don't have a real strong pool of that next generation of athletes. That would be a concern which I think the provinces and the corporate sector could help us with. 128

He added that investment should be made in coaches and support personnel and, with the move to a facility-based approach, help is needed with ongoing operational costs. 129 Mr. Heck of WinSport added that throughout the sport system, there is the need

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126 Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1035.

¹²² Ibid., 0955.

¹²³ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 1035.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 1015.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 0940.

¹²⁸ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1035.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 1025.

to increase collaboration and to avoid duplication. 130 Mr. Thompson of Skate Canada called for federal-provincial collaboration in order to maximize every dollar. 131

Mr. Hills of the Canada Snowboard Federation also testified that many of the financial barriers are at the provincial youth level. He suggested creating "a matching bilateral program of funding at the provincial level to bring the provinces into the funding game, as British Columbia and Quebec have done...." He noted that British Columbia had invested money in high-performance sport with OTP matching these funds. He also noted that Quebec is a leader in the area of education with its Sport-études program. 133

Another suggestion came from Mr. Miller of B2ten, who noted that many of the factors influencing participation — such as physical education in schools — are a provincial responsibility and said, "we face a very skinny future a short 15 years down the road if we do not champion, through public-private partnerships, the cause of physical literacy."134

A number of witnesses noted that the cost of participating in sport is a barrier to young people's participation. Mr. Lindsay of Biathlon Canada testified that many people are introduced to biathlon through the Canadian Armed Forces Cadet Program, but that once they leave, they must supply their own equipment. The rifle alone can cost \$4,000. 135 Mr. Moss of Speed Skating Canada pointed out that ice time now costs a club about \$200 an hour. 136

To address these concerns about cost, Mr. Henwood suggested that the Committee advocate.

...for corporate investment that would help some of those younger kids ... to stay involved. There are lot of organizations, KidSport and so on, that do provide some of that support system, but certainly more is needed to get some of those good young kids to help them stay involved....¹

Ibid., 0940. 134

¹³⁰

Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 1035. 131

Ibid., 0925. 132

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 0915.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 1035.

Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1035. 137

An example of private-sector support was given by Mr. Zamuner of the NHLPA. He described how over the past dozen years, the NHLPA's Goals and Dreams Fund has donated hockey equipment to over 60,000 children around the world. 138

Mr. Norris also called on the federal government to encourage corporate Canada to become more involved. Mr. Farstad of the Canadian Luge Association called on the government to "make it more interesting for a corporation to be involved in sports, things like tax benefits...." Mr. Moss of Speed Skating Canada said the government can create "the environment for corporate Canada to jump on board." 141

Mr. Wilson of Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton also talked about the need for corporate donations, saying:

 \dots if the federal government can give strong consideration to how we can have the corporate community come more to give us support financially so that we have the 3P opportunity to be able to generate more money inside sport, much like in the U.S., that would be very useful. 142

Mr. Fulton of the Canadian Tire Corporation said that in order to encourage more corporate sponsorship, "we need to do a better job as a country of celebrating our athletes and celebrating the success of the investments the government makes." ¹⁴³

CHAPTER 5: THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to monitor the health and well-being of athletes throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Games and use such information to address the medical, physiological and financial support needs of athletes and injured athletes (e.g. concussions).
- The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue with its current funding strategy to the Own the Podium Olympic program.
- 3. The Committee recommends that Sport Canada review its programs to explore a model that promotes development over eight years versus the current four years.

141 1010

¹³⁸ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0945.

¹³⁹ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 4, 21 November 2013, 1035.

¹⁴⁰ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 5, 26 November 2013, 1040.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 7, 3 December 2013, 0920.

¹⁴³ Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, Meeting No. 6, 28 November 2013, 0955.

- 4. The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada explore a program strategy that encourages private-sector investment in sports.
- 5. The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada explore ways, including partnerships with provincial and territorial governments, to encourage greater participation in sports by all Canadians in order to ensure sufficient representation in future Olympic and Paralympic Games and to support the long-term development of Canadian athletes and promote healthy and active lifestyles among youth.
- 6. The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada maintain its commitment to increasing the number of consular staff attending the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi and to implementing special consular contingency plans to address any issues regarding Canadian sexual minorities, in light of Russia's abhorrent anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender laws, and to ensuring the safety and security of all Canadian competitors as well as officials, media, coaches, families and guests of the athletes for the duration of the Games.
- 7. The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada look to work with relevant stakeholders over the longer term to better protect our athletes from inadvertent doping and serious injuries such as concussions.

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

| Organizations and Individuals | Date | Meeting |
|--|------------|---------|
| Canadian Olympic Committee | 2013/11/19 | 3 |
| Marcel Aubut, President | | |
| Caroline Assalian, Chief Sport Officer | | |
| Dimitri Soudas, Executive Director, Communications | | |
| Canadian Paralympic Committee | | |
| Karen O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer | | |
| Martin Richard, Executive Director, Communications and Marketing | | |
| Department of Canadian Heritage | | |
| Bal Gosal, Minister of State (Sport) | | |
| Lane MacAdam, Director, Sport Excellence, Sport Canada | | |
| Own the Podium | | |
| Anne Merklinger, Chief Executive Officer | | |
| Joanne Mortimore, Director, Planning and Operations | | |
| Canadian Sport Institute | 2013/11/21 | 4 |
| Dale Henwood, President and Chief Executive Officer | | |
| WinSport | | |
| Barry Heck, President and Chief Executive Officer | | |
| Stephen Norris, Vice-President, Sport | | |
| B2ten | 2013/11/26 | 5 |
| JD Miller, President | | |
| Biathlon Canada | | |
| Christopher Lindsay, Director, High Performance | | |
| Canada Snowboard Federation | | |
| Steven Hills, Executive Director | | |
| Canadian Luge Association | | |
| Tim Farstad, Executive Director | | |
| Skate Canada | | |
| Daniel Thompson, Chief Executive Officer | | |
| Elizabeth Manley-Theobald, Olympic Silver Medalist | | |
| Speed Skating Canada | | |
| Ian Moss, Chief Executive Officer | | |
| | | |

| Date | Meeting |
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| 2013/11/28 | 6 |
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| 2013/12/03 | 7 |
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| | 2013/11/28 |

APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

Organizations and individuals

Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Brown

Chair