

VANCOUVER WINTER OLYMPICS SHIELD FROM CRITICISM



Carbon emissions from the winter Olympic Games are set to cause problems. The government has been accused of not getting the priorities right.

Canadians have been, quite rightly, very proud of their country for a long time in terms of living standards and the reputation Canada has in the fields of environmental issues and political affairs. However, the **Vancouver Winter Olympics**, scheduled for 2010, have come under a lot of pressure due to **environmental and social issues**. Most countries are delighted to host such an important and prestigious event, yet the Vancouver games could prove to be an exception to the rule. Despite being praised for having such a high standard of living, Vancouver has suffered from unemployment in recent times. There are now problems with people being homeless and surveys have shown that rates of homelessness have risen by as much as 19% since 2005. Some blame this figure on illegal immigrants yet it is still rather significant. What is even more worrying is that the researchers have stated that it must be an undercount. The Downtown Eastside of Vancouver has been particularly affected by such social problems. On a similar note, some find it hard to understand why the Canadian government is so willing to plough money into the games and cut back on health care and social services. Indeed, with 10 months to go, the event still has no official sponsor.

Environmentalists do not look at the games favourably at all. It has been estimated that the games will cause a release of **300.000 tonnes of carbon emissions** into the atmosphere. 4.5 million US dollars would be the estimated cost of offsetting the emissions generated by the 2010 Games and skeptics say that damage is inevitable. In order for a successful set-off of carbon emissions to take place, the government would have to turn to the private sector. Otherwise, ecosystems such as the nearby Eaglerbridge Bluffs could be under threat.

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