

Privilege—Mr. Jelinek

remarks made by the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet) on March 8, when he attempted to twist remarks I made in the House the week previous, March 1, regarding some of the circumstances surrounding the 1976 Olympic games.

I was most surprised, after the government's admitted lack of interest and their recent statements pertaining to the fact that the Montreal olympics were not a federal matter, that the Postmaster General saw fit to waste his entire speech in the throne speech debate on just that matter. From his statements of that date, it is inconceivable that a minister of the Crown—even this minister—could pursue a course of such bigotry.

● (1410)

The minister is entitled to voice any opinion regarding his thoughts and feelings toward my competence to act as the spokesman for this party on Olympic matters. His suggestion to the leader of this party as to a possible replacement will, I am sure, receive the consideration it deserves. But, Mr. Speaker, the minister goes beyond the point of parliamentary etiquette and, in fact, contradicts himself outright when he says that I and my party are anti-Quebec and anti-Olympics.

If the minister would take the time to check the record, he would find that on numerous occasions, inside as well as outside the House, I have stated, on behalf of myself as well as on behalf of our party, our support for the Olympics in general and the site of Montreal as host city in particular.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jelinek: On March 11 my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe, rose on a similar question of privilege on behalf of the party. I now rise on this same matter in defence of my convictions not only regarding the Olympics but in the very important matter of the unity of this country. Therefore I request as a matter of privilege that the Postmaster General retract his statements which are totally untrue and completely unfounded.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member claims that he has a question of privilege. I have serious doubts about that. In any event, his notice and the speech he has just made do not include a motion. I have some qualms also in that this matter is being raised by the hon. member on March 18 and he is referring to a statement made on March 8, ten days ago. I doubt very much that there would be a question of privilege in such circumstances. The minister has indicated that he wants to reply. I wonder whether anything would be gained by pursuing the matter further at this time.

The hon. member claims to be replying to a statement made by the minister during the throne speech debate. That was ten days ago. The hon. member asks that I invite the minister to retract his statement. He knows that the Chair has no power to do this unless the statements made are clearly unparliamentary. I have heard similar statements, perhaps worse, made from time to time, and I would not think that the Speaker should be invited to intervene when a statement of this kind is made in the

[Mr. Jelinek.]

House in the course of debate, sometimes heated debate. Hon. members are aware of the well known precedent that matters which relate to a dispute as to facts should not be the basis for privilege, and I would think that in the circumstances the matter should not be pursued further.

[Translation]

I hope that the minister will agree with me that it is really of little avail to keep on discussing this point. I do not want to deprive the minister of the opportunity to reply since generally it has always been customary to allow an hon. member involved in a statement to reply to it. Should the minister insist, I will have to hear him but I must say that I doubt very much that this is really a question of privilege.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

SUBSIDY TO BEEF PRODUCERS—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Norval Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 43 to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to discuss a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. As a result of the beef subsidy announced by the Minister of Agriculture last Friday, cattle markets are in a state of confusion. They are in effect closed today. The terminal markets are convinced that the subsidy will ruin them, the small packers will then be unable to operate and the large meat packing houses will be able to set the price free of competition. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Pembina (Mr. Hollands):

That the government rescind the subsidy announced last Friday and that they instead institute a subsidy on grain fed to cattle for finishing.

Mr. Speaker: This motion requires unanimous consent under Standing Order 43. Is there unanimity?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimity.

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TRADE

DEFICIT UNDER CANADA-UNITED STATES AUTO PACT—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 concerning the massive turnaround in Canada-U.S. automotive trade, according to figures released today by Statistics Canada which reveal that we have moved from a surplus position to a more than \$350 million deficit position, a turnaround of more than \$400 million in one year. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow):

That this House instruct the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce to make a statement on motions within 24 hours explaining the