

## OLYMPIC GAMES, 1976

## STATEMENT ON OLYMPIC COIN PROGRAM

**Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, of all mankind's collective endeavours, few offer such concrete expression of the universal brotherhood of the peoples of the world as the Olympic games. In providing the only arena where all nations, classes, colours and creeds can come together on an equal footing in fierce but friendly competition, the Olympic ideal is thus at once the great forum of international co-operation and of individual development.

Over the past few decades, however, an inevitable upward spiralling of costs has accompanied the physical expansion of the games themselves. The unfortunate result is that the staging of the Olympics is becoming increasingly the prerogative of large and wealthy nations which can absorb the costs of the event without placing an undue burden on the taxpayer. Needless to say, such restriction because of financing runs contrary to the basic Olympic tradition of equality of opportunity for all. This is why Canada's initiative in the field of financing the games of the twenty-first Olympiad in Montreal is of such crucial importance to the survival of the entire concept. Nations across the world will be keeping a close watch on the developments in this country between now and the summer of 1976.

In this context, therefore, I am particularly happy today to submit to the House a report on the progress of our Olympic coin program which, as hon. members know, is designed to provide revenues to meet the major portion of the costs of the staging of the twenty-first Olympiad in Montreal and Kingston.

[*Translation*]

Since Bill C-196 was passed by this House July 27 this year work has been going forward steadily to establish the production, marketing and distribution systems for our Olympic coins both in Canada and throughout the world.

I am at present engaged in a series of personal visits to key centres across the country, with the dual purpose of disseminating information about the Olympic Coin Program and of assessing initial reaction from opinion-leaders, the media and the public in general. In this latter area, I am very happy to be able to report that enthusiasm everywhere appears to be running high and all indications are that our Olympic Coin Program will be an immense success. As a matter of fact we may have difficulties in keeping up with demand. It is against this background that I can now inform this House that the 1976 Olympic Coin Program was officially launched at noon today with the presentation to His Excellency the Governor General of the first set of coins to be released.

That this self-imposed deadline has been met, despite scepticism and many difficulties, is a tribute to the dedication of all those involved in getting the program under way.

I would ask hon. members to join with me in offering the olympic coin team our hearty congratulations. I would like to mention the name of Mr. Austin Page, Managing Director of the Olympic Coin Program. Mr. Page was recruited from private industry where he was a senior

*Olympic Coin Program*

partner in a leading Canadian management consulting firm. Assisting him are André Morin, Director of Marketing for Europe and a former Vice-President of a large Quebec-based manufacturing firm; Christie Arnold, Director of Marketing for the United States and Mexico, a senior civil servant with wide experience in international trade; Mr. Henk Hoppener, Director of Marketing for the Pacific regions, a corporate planning consultant from private industry.

[*English*]

The coins on sale today represent the forerunners of some 60 million to be minted between now and the close of the games in 1976. The entire operation involves international marketing and distribution on a scale never before envisaged by this country. The coins are to be made available in all of the countries sending Olympic athletes to Canada, some 130 in all.

[*Translation*]

I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to another very important related aspect—spin-off benefits to Canada.

As the momentum of the entire Olympic Coin Program grows, it becomes increasingly evident that it will generate a whole host of additional advantages, destined to have a considerable long-term impact on this country.

The immediate benefits arise from the stimulation of activities related to the direct production, packaging, distribution, communications and similar operations over the next three years.

The longer term benefits involve an enormous wealth of experience in international marketing which Canada will accumulate in connection with the program.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is, of course, the intangible but very important aspect of the enhancing of Canada's image abroad. In the eyes of the other nations, our Olympic Coin Program represents an imaginative innovation, attesting to Canadian resourcefulness and pointing the way for others to follow. This is something of which, I am sure you will agree, we can be justifiably proud.

In the light of all this, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the House to join in offering unanimous support for Canada's 1976 Olympic Coin Program.

I might add that hon. members will have an opportunity to offer concrete evidence of this support. When they return to their offices, they will find order forms enabling them to acquire a complete set of coins from the first issue which is on sale today. I urge them to be the first to take advantage of this opportunity to show their own confidence in the future of the olympic spirit across the world and in this country's role in helping to keep it alive.

● (1420)

[*English*]

**Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the minister's statement, I join with him in offering the Olympic coin team the heartiest congratulations for their achievements so far in getting this program under way. I want to assure the minister that I will be filling out my Olympic coin application upon return to my office.