

The Address—Mr. Ouellet

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate warmly Their Excellencies Mr. and Mrs. Jules Léger on their appointment and I also extend them my best wishes in the discharge of their high responsibilities.

I would also like to congratulate the member for Spadina (Mr. Stollery) and the member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier) who have well discharged their task in proposing and seconding the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I cannot refrain, Mr. Speaker, from pointing out also the outstanding intervention of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) during the debate last week. I think that columnist Charles Lynch was right when he stated:

[English]

In his opening speech of the session it was a different Trudeau—involved, scrappy, funny and confident. It was easily Trudeau's best speech ever in parliament.

● (1500)

[Translation]

That performance does not surprise me at all. It reflects very well the leadership, the stability, the ability of the Prime Minister of Canada. I think it is not superfluous to compare that leadership in Canada to that we can find now in most industrial countries of the free world. In Europe, if you except a few totalitarian régimes, most countries are governed by shaky coalitions or are simply not governed at all.

Almost every country in the Common Market suffers from political instability. There is no government in Italy, we do not know exactly what type of government they will have in Belgium, Chancellor Willy Brandt's régime is on the brink of disaster, Premier Messmer, in France, has had to reshuffle his cabinet in order to hang on and the British have just given themselves a government that was truly elected by the skin of its teeth.

I think that the situation is not much more rosy in the United States where they are wondering from one week to the other when President Nixon is going to resign. Canadians can therefore rejoice in the fact that they have political stability thanks to a statesman who governs with vigour and dynamism. In my view, all Canadians have realized that in these difficult times they needed a strong man to lead the country. The leader of the official opposition (Mr. Stanfield) may be a likeable chap, but he has not and will never have either the strength or stature to be the leader or Prime Minister of this country. In my opinion, it is quite clear that his many attempts to overthrow the government are as useless as his efforts to convince the Canadian people that he is a "valid alternative" to the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). His efforts are fruitless and will remain eternally so. No matter how hard he struggles and frets, he will fail because, as the popular saying goes: "He simply hasn't got it!"

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity this afternoon to deal with a matter of very great concern to me. It is a fact that, in addition to my duties as Postmaster General, I have been entrusted by the House with the responsibility of marketing commemorative postage stamps and coins to help finance the Olympic Games. No

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain).]

matter what a number of hon. members in the opposition may think, I am as eager to fulfill my responsibilities as Postmaster General as I am to sell the commemorative stamps and coins. I strive to discharge my responsibilities to the best of my ability so as to give satisfaction to the Canadian people in these two areas.

For the benefit of the House, I want to come back on some declarations made here that have no doubt caused great prejudice to the whole olympic program. I think that those allegations affect me in so far as I am in charge of the sale of olympic coins and stamps. It is necessary that neither doubt nor smirch should depreciate the olympic organization, and that is why I want to set the facts in their true light and bring some order back in a situation where the privileges of this House have been used to tarnish the reputations of certain individuals and highly commendable organizations.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members know very well what I am talking about. I am talking about the recent statements made in this House by the hon. member for High Park-Humber Valley (Mr. Jelinek) on the sale of television rights to the 1976 Olympic Games. To set the record straight may I first be allowed to point out that the television rights to the Olympic Games are owned by the International Olympic Committee and not by Montreal, COJO or Canada. And the hon. member for High Park-Humber Valley should know that very well. So COJO sold its rights on behalf of IOC. And I quote from section 48 of the 1972 IOC regulations:

The television broadcasting rights to the games will be sold by the organizing committee by delegation of the International Olympic Committee and subject to its approval.

Since the hon. member for High Park-Humber Valley made those very serious charges without substantiating them with evidence, I had the opportunity to meet personally and ask those mainly concerned in that business. Commissioner General His Excellency Roger Rousseau, Mr. Snyder of the Olympic Committee and member of that committee dealing with the adjudication of that television contract, Mr. Arlidge, President of ABC, all told me that the hon. member was completely off the track and the victim of either his imagination or his maliciousness. I leave it to the House to determine whether it is his imagination or his maliciousness.

Members of COJO told me that with respect to the 1976 games a protocol identical to that of Munich and previously Mexico was adopted for the sale of television rights with one exception—COJO hired an expert for the negotiation of television rights and on the advice and recommendation of the organizing committee for the Munich Games. It is through the advice of that expert that a goal was set of \$25 million as compared with \$4.5 million obtained by Mexico City in 1968 and \$13.5 million collected by the Munich Games in 1972, for the sale of television rights to the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to give the House the information that I received on the state of the negotiations. As you know, three American television networks were entitled to submit tenders for the games broadcasting rights. I am told that all of them were invited to do so. However, Munich authorities had warned the organization committee not to give the networks the opportunity to set up a