

over by the Godfather, when this chummy little group will all be able to celebrate together.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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● (1440)

SPORTS

MONTREAL OLYMPICS, 1976—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFICIT

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister in a different vein. As it now appears certain that the Montreal Olympics will incur substantial deficits probably in the millions of dollars owing to unforeseen inflationary pressures, will the Prime Minister reassure the House that the Canadian taxpayer will not have to bear any extra financial burden?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the problem comes under my jurisdiction. The agreement concluded with the City of Montreal and the Quebec government is quite clear. We are helping them collect as much funds as possible through the lottery, stamps and other available means, but we do not intend to make up any deficit.

[English]

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TRANSPORT

REASON FOR ABSENCE OF MINISTER—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Prime Minister. As the Minister of Transport has been noticeably absent from this House for the past several days or weeks, may I ask, is the Minister of Transport away on government official business and, if so, what is the nature of the minister's business?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister was going to respond. May I repeat the question. Can he indicate why the Minister of Transport is absent from the House and, if he is away on government business, will he outline the nature of the business?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is any more necessary for me to keep the House informed of the movements of every one of my ministers than it is for the Leader of the Opposition to keep me informed of the movements of every one of his members.

Mr. Mazankowski: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the serious condition of transportation in this country which by the minister's own admission is in a mess, with no policies coming forward, can the Prime

Oral Questions

Minister assure the House and the country that he will appoint a full-time Minister of Transport who will attend in the House to answer questions and bring forward the kind of positive transportation policy which was promised in the election campaign?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I will inquire, but it is just possible that the minister is consulting at this moment with the well known westerner, the right hon. member for Prince Albert, on the problems of transportation.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Prime Minister's answer illustrates the kind of flippancy which we have witnessed from the Minister of Transport. In view of this flippancy, evasiveness, arrogance and incompetence, will the Prime Minister appoint a new Minister of Transport who can answer questions in this House?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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POST OFFICE

THEFTS FROM MAILS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Postmaster General and arises from the information conveyed on the CBC program "Ombudsman" by the manager of national security of the Bank of Montreal to the effect that \$1.5 million has been lost in thefts in the mails, mainly in the Montreal office. What action has the government taken, and is it taking, to deal with this evidence of continuing malaise in the Post Office Department?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, because of my respect for the hon. gentleman I will send him over a transcript of the program, and if he feels his information is still accurate I will entertain his question a little later in the afternoon.

Mr. Dinsdale: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As security of the mails is essential if we are to restore the confidence of the public in the mails, could the minister make a statement in the House, to give some assurance to the people of Canada?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, the program "Ombudsman" which is designed to help the underprivileged went to the rescue of the Bankers' Association of Canada, which badly needed that assistance.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Nonsense!

Mr. Mackasey: They were concerned about the theft of credit cards. I took objection to their inference that these thefts had involved postal workers rather than people outside the post office. The solution is presumably one we will have to enforce by regulation. Between the middle of November and the middle of December 97,000 credit cards were registered through the mails and only four have been lost or stolen of the number registered.