

sation last week with the retiring U.S. Defense Secretary. I understand that the minister said that Canada is now firmly committed to participating in an AWACS—Airborne Warning and Control System—in Europe as a first priority, but I missed what he said about Canadian participation in an AWACS for North America. Would the minister tell the House if there is a commitment to both these systems, would he indicate the projected cost, and if we are not committed to the North American AWACS, which the U.S. air force is now acquiring, will the U.S. air force be permitted to operate in Canadian airspace?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I cannot give the answer to those questions because there is not a commitment to the system at this time. I believe the proper interpretation of the remarks at that time would have been that NATO ministers agreed that there was a military need for an AWACS in NATO. All ministers are speaking to their governments with reference to their participation, and we hope to meet in Brussels again in the New Year to reaffirm or explain our various government positions, but the expression at that time was not a commitment of this government to an AWACS. There was an indication that all NATO ministers thought there is a need for an AWACS in the NATO system.

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OLYMPIC GAMES

REASON FOR DELAY IN DISTRIBUTION OF COINS

Mr. Bill Kempling (Halton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Postmaster General. In view of the fact that there is a shortfall on the sale of Olympic coins, will the Postmaster General look into the distribution and delivery of Olympic coins? I have heard numerous complaints from constituents who have purchased Olympic coins, received acknowledgement and waited as long as six months for delivery. Further, I understand that many members of this House have purchased full sets of coins and have not received them to this date.

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I had occasion to speak with the director of the coin program prior to his leaving, which will be on December 31, and we discussed the matter quite fully. There have been some delays, and I am very much aware of them; however, it is our intention to make good all the orders which have been made and which have been prepaid to the best of our ability. We ask people to be as patient as possible and invite them to communicate directly with me, if they wish to, so that we can bring about the accelerated delivery of the coins which are already committed.

The Late Olive Diefenbaker

BEREAVEMENT OF THE RIGHT HON. MEMBER FOR PRINCE ALBERT

DEATH OF MRS. O. F. DIEFENBAKER

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It is with a great deal of regret that I advise the House of Commons of the death early this afternoon of Mrs. Olive Freeman Diefenbaker, the wife of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). Mrs. Diefenbaker died at her home at 1.30 this afternoon after an illness of some months.

As hon. members know, she was a daughter of the manse. Her father was a Baptist parson who travelled widely in western Canada, and he served as a minister in Prince Albert, where the late Mrs. Diefenbaker met the right hon. member for Prince Albert. She was a graduate of Brandon College, had a distinguished teaching career, and provided leadership in adult education work in the province of Ontario. She was married in 1953 to the right hon. member for Prince Albert and was with her husband at his election to the leadership of this party, and subsequently at his election to the office of Prime Minister of the country.

I think it is fair to say that Mrs. Diefenbaker was known and respected throughout Canada and abroad for the manner in which she assisted her husband in carrying out his responsibility, and also for the warmth and the openness with which she performed her own responsibilities as the spouse of the Prime Minister of Canada and of the Leader of the Opposition.

Many of us in this House were privileged to know the late Mrs. Diefenbaker for many years. We knew her to be a woman who was gracious in public, and generous and thoughtful in private. She was a friend to many people in this House and to thousands of Canadians outside this House. Particularly in recent years she has been a symbol of strength, courage, courtesy and warmth to Canadians in all the provinces and territories. I am sure I speak on behalf of all my hon. colleagues in this House when I extend our deepest sympathy to the right hon. member for Prince Albert and to the family of the late Olive Diefenbaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, certainly we on this side wish to say that we regard the words spoken by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) as extremely appropriate on this occasion. Many of us knew the late Mrs. Diefenbaker and learned to know the support she was for her husband, and also to know of the many fine personal qualities she possessed in her own right.

All of us will want to convey directly to the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) our condolences on what for him will be a very great loss.

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) and the government House leader on behalf of the