

Mr. LeBlanc:—some control over their fishing efforts and to make sure that, come next August or September, they do not all claim an increase in the quotas on the basis of running short of fish. I think plants which have been open, which are by their nature seasonal plants, or plants which have put in second shifts, as many of them have, in fact are showing that irresponsibility which I have been trying to master for some time.

An hon. Member: So much for the fishermen.

Mr. LeBlanc: You would not know a fisherman from a cow.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: We know the flim-flam.

Mr. Clark: Roméo baloney.

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ASTRA TRUST

DEPARTMENTAL DELAY IN LAUNCHING INVESTIGATION

Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State for Finance I have a question for the Minister of Finance concerning Astra Trust which was chartered by the federal government in 1976 and started operating in 1977. I am sure that it will be of some interest to the House to know there were already so many problems with this company, and with associated companies also controlled by Mr. Montemurro, that in 1978 the federal Superintendent of Insurance was attaching conditions and only renewing the trust company's charter for three-month periods.

My question to the minister is this: why did it take the department two years between 1978 and 1980 to find out the nature of the scam which was involved? How was it possible for the department to continue to allow investors in southern Ontario to invest in a company when it knew in 1978 that this operation was fishy?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the minister of state has been handling this particular aspect of the department's operations. I would suggest that he will get more satisfaction if he were to ask his question of my colleague who will be in the House tomorrow.

Mr. Rae: Madam Speaker, in light of the answers which both the hon. member for Burlington and I have received from the Minister of State for Finance, I am not sure I agree with the minister that we are getting very much satisfaction from any minister in the government dealing with this problem.

An hon. Member: It is a cover up.

Mr. Rae: If the minister is not interested or aware of this problem, believe me, Madam Speaker, he will be interested and aware of this problem by the time we are finished dealing

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with it, because it involves a very important problem for many investors.

My question for the Minister of Finance is this: how was it possible for loans to have been made to a company called Canadian Recycling Ltd.—it is rather an appropriate name in light of the circumstances—and for loans to have been made to many of the directors of Astra Trust, and to individuals linked for ten years to organized crime? How was it possible for those loans to have been made over two and three years, between 1977 and 1980, and for the department to do nothing to warn other innocent investors in this company that there was something dreadfully wrong with this operation, as well as with the operation of Re-Mor Mortgage, and C & M Consultants Ltd., and Canadian Recycling, the four companies involved in this operation?

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, I never implied that the hon. member would get satisfaction in complete perfection. I just said that I thought he would get more satisfaction from my colleague than from me—

An hon. Member: What is new?

Mr. MacEachen:—and I am certain of that in light of the answer I am now going to give to the hon. member, which is the same as the former one.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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COMMUNICATIONS

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications. In view of the fact that Canada will face a \$4 billion to \$5 billion annual trade deficit in office electronics by the year 1985, and in light of the fact that the minister has stated that the challenge of making significant inroads into the burgeoning multi-billion dollar office electronics market is beyond the capability of any single Canadian firm, would he indicate to this House what appropriate steps the government is taking to make the electronics industry more competitive and to increase its exports by winning world markets?

An hon. Member: He has already announced it.

Mr. Andre: ElectroCan.

Mr. Crosbie: ElectroCute.

An hon. Member: ChryslerCan.

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to reply to the very important question raised by my colleague. I would point out that a few months ago I announced the federal government's intention, particularly through the Department