

member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay). It was a newspaper advertisement from an overseas paper making clear reference to the fact that Oxfam Quebec—and I divorce Oxfam Quebec from Oxfam Canada but nevertheless an organization carrying the same name, an organization of international repute—that Oxfam Quebec was soliciting funds to aid it in gaining its independence. If these are indeed the aims and objectives of the Oxfam organization, be it Oxfam Canada or Oxfam Quebec, surely as a charitable foundation, to which Canadians are asked to subscribe, it should come under the most close scrutiny by the Minister of National Revenue.

● (2212)

In connection with the comments of one of its officers regarding the accounting practices of CIDA—it should also come under the scrutiny of the minister responsible for CIDA who in turn provides funds to some non-governmental organizations. I find it regrettable that I should have to stand and speak about an organization which has in the past done a great deal for the aid and comfort of those, particularly in the Third World countries. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, if this organization has now taken upon itself a political flavour, which I personally find unacceptable, then I think it is incumbent upon the government to inquire as to whether or not it should be entitled to qualify for tax deductions as a registered charitable organization.

In addition let me say that the practice of deception by any officer of any charitable organization which seeks funding from willing Canadians, and Canadians are well known for their charity, and which would attempt to deceive the public by failing to reveal the true political intent of the organization when it should have none, opens that organization to the most serious question. I find it regrettable that I should have to throw into question this particular organization.

Mr. Maurice Dupras (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I hope to be able to reassure my distinguished colleague from Kootenay West (Mr. Brisco) concerning the operation of Oxfam Canada. I will begin by telling him that I am not divorcing Quebec Oxfam from the Canada operation; there is only one Oxfam operation.

CIDA has recently completed a careful analysis of the Oxfam Canada financial position, covering the period May, 1973, to April, 1977. This analysis was done in consultation with Oxfam and was based on a review of their annual audited statements for this period, all of which are on file with CIDA NGO division. No problem concerning advance payments was noted during the CIDA review.

[Translation]

CIDA supplies OXFAM with funds for special projects sponsored by the latter abroad and payments are made through Treasury Board. When OXFAM asks for co-financing of a project, it also advises CIDA of when funds will be needed. Small and medium-sized projects are usually financed through a single payment made in a single fiscal year. More important projects are usually spread out over a period of

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several years and the second and third payments are made by CIDA only on the strength of descriptions and financial reports which meet its requirements. Upon receiving funds from CIDA for a specific project, OXFAM supplies the agency with copies of the document through which both CIDA and OXFAM funds were transferred overseas. In 1975-76, CIDA granted OXFAM-Canada a total amount of \$324,940, and in 1976-77, \$418,664. This year, total contributions by CIDA are estimated to reach from \$320,000 to \$350,000.

CIDA will continue to exercise regular control over the financial statements published by OXFAM-Canada, as it does for all organizations that receive funds through its Non-Governmental Organizations Division.

● (2217)

[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS—DELAY IN RESPONDING TO STEVESTON OIL SPILL—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO RECTIFY

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, on November 22 I rose to ask a question of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Marchand), who is one of the ministers representing British Columbia in the cabinet. I rose to ask him about the oil spill which took place on August 29 at Steveston on the Fraser River. I pointed out that the spill had been reported at 11 p.m. on the evening of August 29 but that, according to all reports, nothing was done until 15 hours later, some time in the afternoon of August 30, and that the bulk of the equipment did not reach the spot until over 40 hours later.

I asked the minister whether anybody in his department had been sacked as a result of that gross exhibition of negligence and mismanagement, and the incredible answer the minister gave me was that no one had been sacked following the Steveston spill. He went on to say:

I was satisfied that everything possible had been done. There was a little delay in getting the spill reported, but once it was reported, Environment Canada officials were on the spot right away and did a very thorough clean-up.

Mr. Speaker, that is simply not accurate. There was no delay in reporting the spill. The delay was in the department's reaction to that report.

Ever since I was elected three years ago I have been pressing the minister for the environment, whoever he might be, to assure us that there was adequate clean-up equipment available in British Columbia to deal with a major spill on the west coast. And always I was informed that there was ample equipment available and that it could be deployed very quickly if necessary, with the use of up-to-date computer techniques and so on. But it still took almost 15 hours for the equipment to get through in spite of all those technological marvels in the department. It so happens that the man in charge, the regional manager of the emergency operation, Captain Young, said the spill was reported to him but he was not asked to supply any clean-up equipment. Mr. Speaker, I hope that man is never in receipt of a May-day signal because his response would be, "Do you want me to come and help?"

I went to look at this particular spill. It was an incredible sight. Here was a blind slough—there was no place for the