

Oral Questions

released on November 27 already indicated that mussels were toxic. The outcome of all this is that in excess of 100 people are sick and that a second victim has died today. And then the ban on seafoods, which covered perfectly good products including—through sheer blunder, I might add—such things as lobsters, shrimps and scallops, made fishermen, wholesalers, fish dealers and restaurant owners incur huge financial losses. I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he thinks it might be fair and equitable if his Government were to repair the damage it has done to the victims as a result of its own blunders and mistakes.

[*English*]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's Leader stated the health priority in the House. I have stated the health priority. Now, the answer today is the same answer I have given every day as to the knowledge of the issue for this Minister, that the information came to me on November 30th and that the health alert went out on December 1. The Member cannot change the facts. The Member cannot put a different twist on the facts.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): The facts of your negligence.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): So to the Hon. Member I say that just today in his question he now used the word "seafood". That has not been the issue. Just analyse what you are saying. Analyse what you are doing to the industry. But, more importantly, analyse what you are doing to the health of Canadians. He cannot have it both ways.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

CONSUMPTION OF TOXIC MUSSELS—QUERY WHY GOVERNMENT REFUSED JUST COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, it is clear the Minister of National Health and Welfare does not intend to acknowledge his responsibility, nor does the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. That is why I am directing my question to the Prime Minister, who in the final instance will have to decide about compensating the victims. Both ministers have behaved like bulls in a china shop, and today, the Prime Minister has to decide what to do next. Why is the Government refusing to pay fair compensation to people who became victims through the Government's fault?

• (1450)

[*English*]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, as I have said so many times, the health issue will remain as the priority issue. There is a very clear plan in terms of how to restore the industry and to keep the health issue as the primary issue.

The Hon. Member will have to think of his words and his partisanship in relation to what he wants to do. Not only does he want to make the points about responsibility, he also wants to use his position in this House to raise—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for York East.

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INCOME TAX

FUNDING OF NDP MUNICIPAL ELECTION CANDIDATES—
ISSUANCE OF RECEIPTS FOR TAX DEDUCTIONS

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. He is aware that financial contributions made to municipal political candidates are not deductible for income tax purposes.

However, according to a recent report, supporters of NDP municipal candidates in the city of Toronto have been making contributions to those candidates and receiving federal income tax receipts.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Redway: They have been doing it by funnelling the money through the federal New Democratic Party.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Redway: Is this NDP tax rip-off legal and, if so, will the Minister immediately move to close this NDP tax loophole?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I am sure this matter is of interest to all political Parties in this Chamber. I can assure my colleagues that our Department, pursuant to its responsibilities, will check into the amounts of the receipts and authenticate them.

Mr. Crosbie: And prosecute.

Mr. MacKay: Insofar as the use or purpose to which the contributions are made is concerned, I think that is probably within the jurisdiction of Elections Canada.

Mr. Jelinek: It is a question of morality.

Mr. MacKay: That process will be looked at very carefully. It is not in the interest of any of us in this Chamber that these political contributions which are, after all, a special form of tax deduction, should be abused or misused.

Mr. Crosbie: You are tattle-tale grey, Ed.

An Hon. Member: Honest Ed.