

Oral Questions

with particular attention to the accountability of the Council to the minister and to parliament?

Mr. Robert Daudlin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): The hon. member will recall that when a similar question was asked of the minister yesterday before that committee the minister indicated to him quite clearly that parliament has directed the minister, in a general way, to administer the funds under votes and estimates of the Canada Council but has withheld from the ministry the opportunity in an administrative way of prejudging or judging after the fact the way in which the Canada Council, or the Film Board or similar bodies, have handled the money. If parliament should decide that the department ought to be second-guessing where grants should be going, or for what projects, then parliament can give that kind of authority to the ministry.

VIEW OF MINISTER OF FINANCE ON GRANTS FOR MR. BISSETT'S POETRY

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): A supplementary to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the statement by the former Secretary of State that the Canada Council has given assistance to Mr. Bissett because he is recognized as a fine, creative artist, that the Canada Council based its decision on the advice of experts, and, further that Mr. Grace of the Canada Council had recognized the talent and excellence of Mr. Bissett, and having surveyed the disgusting and pornographic exhibits of Mr. Bissett's published works, sponsored by the Canada Council, which are now before the minister on his desk, may I ask whether the Minister of Finance supports the granting of public tax dollars to this poet and to the publishing houses which have printed such outrageous abuse and affront to the Canadian parliament?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I must tell the hon. member that I have here a document which I left unopened because I was following the oral question period. I am going to open it now but not without some apprehension.

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[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

PURCHASING OF TAX REFUNDS—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO LIMIT CHARGES

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs or for the Minister of National Revenue, but I would prefer to address it to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The Prime Minister in 1974, in a pre-election speech, referred specifically to members engaged in the purchasing of tax refunds and old-age security cheques. Since some of these loan sharks are making between 400 and 600 per cent profit on these transactions does the minister propose to

[Mr. Wenman.]

take action to deal with this situation before the new tax filing year which is fast approaching?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): It is our intention to reintroduce a bill dealing with depositors and borrowers. We hope to do that soon. But I would point out that part of the problem referred to by the hon. member comes under provincial jurisdiction and I understand the provinces are prepared to take action as well.

Mr. Paproski: Would the minister contact and help the community income tax service of Alberta which is part of the student legal service in Edmonton, a non-profit organization providing low-cost tax preparation and tax advance services? Maybe he could make available some of the offices in the federal building which are not in use by his own department in Edmonton?

Mr. Allmand: I am pleased to say yes to the first question. I will look into the second.

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INCOME TAX

DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT OXFAM CANADA IS CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. I have given him notice. May I ask whether in light of the documentation I have provided to him he has had an opportunity to review the activities of OXFAM Canada and whether he has decided that OXFAM Canada is not a charitable organization under the terms of the act?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): I thank the hon. member for having given me notice of this question. I have prepared an answer for him. OXFAM Canada has not requested that its registration be revoked nor has it requested a registration order under another name. In 1972 its name was formally changed from OXFAM of Canada to OXFAM Canada but this did not entail a new registration. OXFAM Canada is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act. Registration is an ongoing status until such time as the charity ceases to comply with the requirements of the Act concerning registered charities. A charity which ceases so to comply may have its registration revoked by the Minister of National Revenue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brisco: I should like to thank the minister for his epistle and turn, now, to the gospel. In the light of the fact that OXFAM has indicated that it would set out to deceive some segments of the public in obtaining its funds, would the minister now tell me, in the light of the documentation provided him, whether or not he intends to cancel OXFAM's registration as a charitable organization?