

Oral Questions

While none of the outside service bureaux so reviewed have been cleared by the RCMP to process such data, the Auditor General points out there are a number of instances where private and confidential data have been processed by these bureaux which have not been cleared in terms of handling highly confidential data. How long has this been going on and what types of confidential and classified data have been handled by these outside bureaux which have not been cleared by the RCMP?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I would not be able to give the hon. member on this occasion such detail as he is requesting. All these measures are being brought to our attention. Indeed, effective correctional measures are being taken in almost every case. There will be the odd one that the Auditor General has developed in his report which may be fresh to us and which we will act on as quickly as possible.

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INCOME TAX**USE OF PRIVATE COMPUTER ORGANIZATIONS FOR STORAGE OF CONFIDENTIAL TAX INFORMATION**

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Minister of National Revenue. Has National Revenue contracted with or have any of these outside service bureaux which have not received RCMP security clearance been used to handle or process income tax data?

● (1112)

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to say I certainly appreciate the comments of the Auditor General because everything he said pertaining to my department has already been rectified.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I am pleased indeed that he brought these matters to our attention. With regard to the other point concerning the use of computer services, yes, we do make use of computer service: there is one firm in Ottawa with whom we have an arrangement and I would point out that when we turn the material into the computer there are no names or social insurance numbers attached; the material is coded and we have a man there at all times who is the only person who can decode it if and when we need him to do so. So there is no problem there. Everything is in good hands.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REASON FOR FAILURE TO CONSULT WITH CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS ON LEAKS OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a question for the Minister of National Revenue. Two days ago the minister told the House

[Mr. Andre.]

that after two weeks of intensive investigation into the leaks from his department of personal and confidential information relating to individual taxpayers the only cases he has been able to turn up where this has happened were the four cases reported two weeks ago by Charles Templeton and Pierre Berton. In view of the fact that there have been a number of radio interviews with chartered accountants from various parts of the country indicating that his department for years has given out personal and confidential information over the telephone, why did those engaged in his investigation not consult with those accountants to determine how extensive this practice has been and whether or not the privacy of individual taxpayers has been violated?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): The hon. member keeps getting up and repeating the same thing at all times. I should like to repeat to him again—

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):—that one of the reasons I am not giving a report pertaining to the RCMP is that I do not wish to interfere with the investigation which is taking place and spoil it—that is about the size of it; that is what members over there would like to see happen. If hon. members opposite have any names, anything specific to give me so that I can investigate those cases, I can guarantee that I will make the inquiries. It is all right for you and your group on the other side to make all kinds of allegations. There is nothing in them—

Mr. Clark: The IQ of a rock!

REASON FOR FAILURE TO INVESTIGATE CLAIMS BY CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS THEY OBTAINED CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): I hope the minister will try to keep himself under control. We can accept on this side of the House that the minister needs all the help he can get and we are pleased to assist him in any way possible. In view of the fact that on Wednesday of this week, following the minister's statement in reply to me in the House, he was not able to uncover any cases besides the four presented to him two weeks ago, may I ask the hon. gentleman why he has not been able to get one of his 9,000 employees to listen to broadcast reports, including the one on Wednesday by News Radio which quoted a chartered accountant in Toronto that despite the minister's claim that security had been tightened up he was still able to get information about individual taxpayers over the telephone? Why has the minister failed to look into these widespread broadcast reports?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): Once again, the allegations are not factual at all. I should like the hon. member to give me the name of the firm involved. I should like to have it. It is easy for members on the other side to make these allegations.

The hon. member for St. John's asked me the other day whether or not we were giving information to the RCMP or receiving it from them. My answer, according to my belief at