

Ontario apple growers who produce the best tasting apples in Canada if not the whole world.

Mr. Speaker, we had been led to believe that these payments would be non taxable. Apparently, there is now some confusion arising from the replies made by some Revenue Canada officials. I would like the minister to clear this confusion, so that apple growers may know where they stand as they are about to prepare their income tax returns for last year. Mr. Speaker, we hope also that the Quebec government will not try to get its cut.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform the Hon. Member that these compensation payments made to apple growers for losses resulting from frost a couple of years ago are not considered as income and are not to be included in the growers' taxable income.

The frost and the ensuing loss of apple trees have had the effect of lowering the value of these properties, so that the base for capital assessment of the said properties is lower. But as far as the compensation payments from the Canadian government are concerned, they are not added to the income of apple growers and are not taxable.

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[English]

NATIONAL REVENUE

AUDITORS' PERSONNEL REVIEWS—REMOVAL OF REFERENCES TO GOALS

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. When questioned on Friday as to why personnel reviews in Revenue Canada are being amended without prior knowledge of the employees, the Minister passed it off by suggesting that I attend his Estimates Committee meeting. This is too important an issue to be passed to the bureaucracy so the Minister can escape his responsibility. Both I and the Canadian people want to know who gave the order that the personnel files of Revenue Canada auditors be examined and that all references to goals be removed from their work reviews?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I shall have to check the details mentioned in the Hon. Member's question. I wanted to do so this morning but unfortunately I did not have time.

[English]

AUTHORIZATION FOR ALTERATION OF RECORDS

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, I might be able to help the Minister. I have a personnel assessment of an auditor which was completed, signed, and receipted in August of 1983. On January 20, 1984, an amended form was forwarded to the employee, together with a

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covering memo which stated in part, "basically the change was an improvement over the original wording . . . something to do with an 'erroneous' reference to a set 'standard' rate".

I ask again: who gave the order to have these personnel records altered? Was it the Minister? Was it the Prime Minister? Was it the Deputy Minister? Who gave the order to remove all reference to "quotas" or to "set standard rates" for auditors? Come clean with the Canadian people.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I have just indicated to the Hon. Member that I have to check the fact which he has just drawn to my attention. Considering my previous answer, he will understand that I cannot answer his second question.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the status of women. The NDP is shocked to learn that the Office of Equal Opportunities for Women in the Public Service Commission is to be closed on April 1. This will mean 95,000 women clerks and secretaries in the Public Service will lose the one central office which acts as a watchdog for their concerns within government. Will the Minister confirm that the Government intends to shut down this important service for women on April 1?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I, too, heard that rumour on Friday and was most alarmed, so I checked with the Public Service Commission and got a report on the situation. The Commission is attempting to add strength to its previous efforts by adopting new special measures and by examining the possibility of transferring the present functions of the Office of Equal Opportunities for Women into the operating branches of the Commission where more direct influence can be exerted on the operational processes such as recruitment, referral, counselling, and training, as well as in the policy-setting functions. However, there is no intention to close that office on April 1. There is a policy under way to re-examine how best the office can be strengthened within the new affirmative action program. I would like to add that the present regional equal opportunities offices functions are not under review at this time, will not be closed, and there will be no jobs lost in the procedure.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, surely the Minister should know that the affirmative action program does not offer the extensive training, educational,