

*Oral Questions*

those countries; they will not come here. It seems to me that it is quite obvious that this would be the reasonable and normal conclusion that any sensible Canadian would reach.

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**NATIONAL REVENUE**

## OFFICIALS' TREATMENT OF FISHERMEN'S FAMILIES

**Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. The P.E.I. Minister of Fisheries told the PC task force on Revenue Canada in Charlottetown that Revenue Canada officials, aided by the RCMP, descended upon fishing families there and used "criminal-interrogation techniques" in their audits of law-abiding citizens. That Minister said that "Revenue Canada has terrorized communities, demoralizing our people and creating fear and mistrust among them."

Knowing as he must that he, the Minister of Revenue, is ultimately responsible for such wrongdoing against decent, law-abiding people, how can he in good conscience refuse to tender his resignation so that confidence can be restored in the tax system and in Revenue Canada, not only in Prince Edward Island, but right across Canada?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the Hon. Member would show more common sense. I am convinced that that statement is a gross exaggeration of the facts. That is a far cry from Revenue Canada's internal policy with respect to Canadian taxpayers.

[English]

**Mr. McMillan:** The Minister has just called the Minister of Fisheries of Prince Edward Island a liar.

## FUNCTIONING OF DEPARTMENT—MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, for months the Minister of Revenue has proven himself administratively incompetent. He has misled Parliament and, through Parliament, the people of Canada, with respect to auditors' quotas in his Department. By all accounts his Department is completely out of control. Every taxpayer in the country has lost confidence in his ability to be fair. What would it take—a major tax revolt—for the Minister to tender his resignation?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member claims that the Department is completely out of control. I must point out to him that we are now processing over 17 million tax returns and that, up until a few days ago, we already had refunded in excess of \$500 million to Canadian taxpayers. We are now more than a month ahead of last year's pace, Mr. Speaker, and if that is not a sure sign of the Department's efficiency and sound management, I really do not know what it is.

[English]

## TAX STATUS OF NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION CIVIL LIBERTIES ASSOCIATION

**Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the same Minister regarding his control of his Department. In testimony yesterday before the PC task force on Revenue Canada, officers of the National Capital Region Civil Liberties Association reported that early in 1982 the Association received almost \$10,000 in donations to assist a Canadian citizen, based on the compelling nature of his case.

In the fall of 1982, President Don Whiteside made a routine inquiry with the Minister's officials about filing on behalf of the Association and was told, to his amazement, that their charitable tax status had been cancelled a couple of years previously. Will the Minister explain why he permitted this attack on this Association's important work? Why were they not given notice that their status was being revoked, and why did they not have time to appeal?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind the Hon. Member that it is very difficult for me to comment on a particular case, for the simple reason that I am prevented from doing so under the provisions of the act. Secondly, had he had the courtesy of bringing that case to my attention, I would have examined the facts.

However, perhaps I should tell him that when an organization fails to abide by its contract with society—charitable organizations must indeed operate within strict parameters if we want the system to be administered in all fairness—it receives a warning to that effect.

Supposing that a mistake might have been made in this case, I would urge the Hon. Member not to draw a general conclusion. Surely he knows enough about the administration of that division to refrain from jumping to such a conclusion.

[English]

**Mr. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, it is difficult for Canadian voluntary agencies to have confidence in the sense of fair play of the Minister and his officials when there is not even an element of courtesy when a decision is being made. In answer to the Minister, I have raised in recent weeks the case of the B.C. Human Rights Association, and that of l'Association des services de réhabilitation sociale du Québec, which have also been treated in an arbitrary manner.

## ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES OF CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm the report that the Department has authorized the engagement of five additional lawyers to investigate advocacy activities of Canadian charities?