

Oral Questions

within Newfoundland. We will continue to come up with solutions as they are required.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the minister that the need is now. It is now November and it is getting pretty cold. People must have enough to survive for this winter. The Minister has created a catch-22 situation in the qualifying because in order to qualify, you must have 10 weeks of benefit period in the fishery only last year. The only way people qualified last year was through the special response feature that she had announced. That amounts to a catch-22 situation for fishermen and plant workers who want to qualify.

Will the minister modify the qualifications for her program this year and build in the flexibility that includes a long-term attachment to the fishery rather than simply insisting that people have 10 weeks of qualifying only in the fishery last year, because that creates a catch-22?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, what we have done is design the program this year with the flexibility in it that we have always had so that it will define it directly for people who have an attachment to the fishery.

My officials in Newfoundland are working very closely with the workers and with the industries around the definitions and their interpretation. I will be in touch with them on a regular basis to ensure that the programs we have established meet the goals that they were intended to meet.

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MEMBER OF THE SENATE

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. He read the press release which indicated that the records of the FBDB did not show that Senator Cogger did any work. Since the cheques were sent to Senator Cogger and since Senator Cogger did the billing, has FBDB checked to make sure that Senator Cogger did not do the work?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the FBDB would have no way of knowing who in the firm did the work and it is not its responsibility. As I interpret the hon. member, and perhaps he might correct me if I am wrong, is the hon.

member suggesting it is the responsibility of FBDB to ensure that in fact the funds paid in terms of legal work was not for work done by anybody who might be prohibited from doing so under Section 14? If that responsibility is evident in the act, perhaps he could point out the language that would impose this responsibility on the FBDB.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, the bill was sent July 5 from the senator to FBDB. The file indicates that the president of FBDB himself authorized the payment to the senator's firm. The letter was sent back to the senator. Is it not quite obvious and is it not a concern of this minister that his agency did not check to see whether or not Senator Cogger was indeed breaking the law of Canada?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the continuous repetition of these questions is probably good reason why these should be reserved to the Senate where the senator has asked for a special committee to be struck to look into it and those kinds of matters to be pursued.

I remind the hon. member that the invoice came from the law firm of Lapointe Rosenstein. The cheque from FBDB was paid to Lapointe Rosenstein. The comptroller checked with the officer in the company that had requested the legal service to see whether in fact it had been done. The president said yes, it had been done, the bill should be paid. The president has checked his records thoroughly and can find no evidence, as he said in a press release on Friday, that Senator Cogger undertook any of the legal work. I realize again that in this desperate search for a scandal, you leave no rock unturned, but I am afraid this happens to be the truth.

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In the riding of Elk Island, a well known music producer has told me that the existing manufacturers' sales tax is crippling the music industry in western Canada. He informed me that under the present system, the federal government collects the sales tax before his products are sold. This seems unfair. He claims that the new GST may help. Is this in fact true and, if so, how will the proposed new GST system help the music industry, especially at a time