

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. MacEachen:** I believe the Minister of Finance and others have stated in the House on more than one occasion that Canada has benefited greatly from this auto pact. Obviously there are problems which must be overcome, but to suggest that the pact be junked in favour of a Canadian domestic automobile market is, to my mind, somewhat preposterous.

**Mr. Saltsman:** I think the most preposterous suggestion is the one we have just heard, because Americans listening to it will simply refuse to pay any attention to improving our position. I asked the minister, and I hope he will reply, this question: Does the government have an alternative program so that we will not be at the mercy of the U.S. under this agreement and so they cannot do as they please with us?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, I have already attempted to answer that question twice, and I do not think I would do any better if I were to make a third effort.

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[Translation]

## AGRICULTURE

STABILIZATION PAYMENTS TO POTATO GROWERS—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the fact that it has now been twelve days since the minister announced in the House the decision to provide potato growers with stabilization payments, and in view of the fact also that the terms and the amounts of such interim payments have not yet been determined, can the minister advise the House this morning when a final decision will be made, since potato growers, especially in the maritimes, are protesting the fact that this decision is being delayed?

[English]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I would hope very soon.

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## REVENUE CANADA

CIRCULAR RESPECTING POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CHARITABLE  
ORGANIZATIONS

**Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister answering for the Minister of National Revenue who now rests in the other place.

**An hon. Member:** May he rest in peace.

**Miss MacDonald:** It concerns the circular sent out by Revenue Canada to all charitable organizations warning them that if they involve themselves in so-called political activities

[Mr. Saltsman.]

such as writing letters to MPs or to editors, their status as charitable organizations, and hence their tax exemptions, may be cancelled.

Since in the minds of many Canadians this is in direct violation of the right of individuals and groups to take an active interest in issues of important political significance, will the government immediately withdraw these ridiculous guidelines and bring in an amendment to the Income Tax Act which would do away with these outdated regulations? I am sure the minister will recall that this matter was first raised by the hon. member for St. John's East—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I am not the Acting Minister of National Revenue.

**An hon. Member:** Who is?

**Mr. MacEachen:** I can tell the hon. member, however, that the circular or guideline to which she has referred is presently under consideration. I cannot give her any assurance that it will be withdrawn, but I can tell her that it is being looked at.

**Miss MacDonald:** Will the minister give the House the assurance that an amendment to the Income Tax Act will be brought in to do away with these outdated regulations? Further, will he explain why at this time it was felt necessary, in light of the work done by the churches and charitable organizations in this country in addressing themselves to matters of social significance, to remind them that the making of written or oral representations "to all or mostly all members of parliament or ministers of the Crown as part of a campaign to influence intended or specific legislation is a political activity and as such cannot be properly carried on by a charity that wishes to maintain registered status"? What kind of interference with freedom of speech is that, Mr. Speaker?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacEachen:** I cannot give the hon. member an assurance that we will introduce amendments to the Income Tax Act with respect to this matter within a short period. If the House is in session for an extended period, it may be possible to do so. I will look at the portion of the guidelines to which the hon. member has referred and try to provide an explanation of why it was thought necessary to communicate this advice to the churches.

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## FISHERIES

## FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS VIOLATING QUOTAS

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** Mr. Speaker, I will direct a question to the Minister of Fisheries. According to recent reports, there is at present uncontrolled harvesting of fish stocks on the southeastern and southern edges of the Grand Bank just beyond the 200-mile limit, reports confirmed on Thursday of this week by officials of the Department of External Affairs.