

Oral Questions

appointed to the Department because of the added responsibility of that Department.

REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO AID BRITISH COLUMBIA INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is well aware that the quota for the commercial fishery has been substantially reduced this year to some 35,000 metric tonnes. This has serious implications, not only for fishermen but for the adequacy of the Salmonid Enhancement Program.

● (1440)

Would the Minister and his Government make the same kind of commitment to the British Columbia fishing industry as was made to the Atlantic fishing industry in restructuring and upgrading that industry, so that fishermen and the general public in British Columbia can be assured that funds will go into a buy-back to reduce pressure in the industry, and into the Salmonid Enhancement Program, as was committed in 1977 by the same Government?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the Pacific fishery faces some serious problems. However, I do not see the relevance of the Hon. Member's reference to the Atlantic fishery. As he knows, the Government of Canada has not approved any buy-back program for the Atlantic coast. One would have to consider the implications of the policy advocated by the Hon. Member. Should we use taxpayers' money to buy surplus assets in the fishery sector, the textile sector, or any other sector? I have put those ideas to the advisory council on the Pacific coast, and at this moment we are searching for the most realistic solution. However, I cannot give more information at this time.

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NATIONAL REVENUE

DEPARTMENT'S THIRD PARTY DEMANDS ON SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. I would like him to bear in mind his words concerning professional standards and objective service to the clients of the tax department. How can he uphold our traditional standards of fairness and objectivity when, at year end 1983, there was a wild increase in third party demands by Revenue Canada on small businesses and individual citizens which froze their accounts, caused cheques to be bounced, ruined credit ratings, and weakened banker-client relations? How can he justify that upsurge? Why is it that "Big Brother" Government is closing its jaws on individual Canadians, with tremendous increases in third party demands?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I think I gave part of the answer to the question of

the Hon. Member when I answered another question yesterday. I gave figures which indicate an increase in tax accounts receivable in recent months. A comparison of those accounts receivable for 1981-82 and 1982-83 shows that there has been a significant increase.

In other words, if the amounts owing increase, if the accounts receivable increase, it is because taxpayers have been even more delinquent in paying their taxes within the time limit prescribed under the act. The Hon. Member will note that Parliament has agreed to add to the Income Tax Act a provision under which the Minister can take legal action to collect any amount still due 30 days after a notice of assessment has been mailed. We wait much longer than that 30-day period.

However, the Hon. Member will agree with me that the House has given to the Minister of National Revenue and his officials the responsibility to make sure that, when tax accounts receivable increase significantly and even dramatically, a more effective tax collection strategy is followed so that delinquents—those who choose not to pay their taxes, unlike millions of others who have no choice and must pay them every week, every two weeks or every month—who enjoy more leeway under our system are forced to pay their taxes.

[English]

Mr. Malone: The Minister has just told us that, if we harass without ethics, we will get more revenues for the Government.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

RESCINDING OF THIRD PARTY DEMANDS

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, in several local bank branches with which I have checked, where third party demands were imposed, within 48 hours, in at least two cases, all but one of the third party demands had been rescinded? How can he justify simply putting third party demands out, and rescinding them afterwards? Why was there no signed authority in those third party demands? They were just simply rubber-stamped, with no signature. Is anybody responsible? Why did people, for only \$350, have third party demands made on their accounts? Can the Minister justify that in the name of getting more money for the Government of Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the way the Hon. Member states certain facts—which have yet to be proven—shows that he is unaware of departmental practices and that, perhaps on the basis of an isolated case, he has failed to inquire about the practices of the Department before raising a question and making insinuations in the House. I pointed out to him that, before taking legal action and making third party demands, for instance, we follow a lengthy procedure and establish close contact between the taxpayer and the Tax Data Centre and the district office.