

Oral Questions

appropriate to consider such material as a manufactured product.

That which irks concrete mixers, who have now had bestowed upon them the dubious honour of being elevated in status to that of manufacturers, is the extreme complexity of the calculations needed to determine the tax payable.

● (1115)

After having obtained his eight digit licence number and ten digit account number, the new manufacturer must consult at least ten memoranda to compute the tax and fill out a multitude of forms connected with the remission thereof. At least 14 different items, including various delivery charges, have to be factored in when computing the tax, with the result that the tax per cubic yard for each truckload will be quite different.

Could the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. MacKay) simplify the system so that it is not necessary to have a chartered accountant riding shotgun on every cement truck?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FISHERIES

SALE OF CANNED TUNA—NEW BRUNSWICK RESEARCH COUNCIL REPORT

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, we were to have started today with a question on the tragic earthquake in Mexico. However, we have been informed that the Minister for External Relations will be making a statement on motions on this matter at a later time, and we will certainly be replying to it.

Therefore, I direct my question to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It concerns a revelation today in the report of the Research and Productivity Council of New Brunswick, the Crown corporation upon which the Minister based his information in order to release the product, indicating that the Minister released that product before the results of the test came to him. Will he now stand in his place and admit publicly that he made a very, very grave mistake in judgment?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about what the Hon. Member has just said. If I heard him correctly, he is saying that the product was released before we had the results of the report of the New Brunswick Research Council. That is clearly not the case. In fact the product was not released until we had the results of a further independent report which I commissioned.

TESTING DONE BY COUNCIL

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, the press release issued by the Research and Productivity Council of

New Brunswick clearly indicates that the Minister of Fisheries released about a million cans of tuna before its testing was completed. There is nothing any clearer than that. Is the Minister denying that allegation by the corporation upon which he relied for advice?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Hon. Member will bring to me the document which he has. What he is saying is completely contrary to what happened. I am sure the Hon. Member will do the civil and appropriate thing and speak to me about it in a few minutes.

REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. This time I will direct my question to the Prime Minister. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans committed a grave mistake in judgment. He allowed a product to go on the market-place without any testing results whatsoever.

It is with some reluctance that I have to ask this question. Will the Prime Minister do the honourable thing and demand the resignation of his Minister of Fisheries?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is about the fifth or sixth time this question has been raised. I think I have explained the circumstances and the celerity with which the Government acted. There having been no threat to health and safety, we wanted the cans removed in any case. We are now assured that new procedures will preclude this occurring in the future.

● (1120)

The Deputy Prime Minister has reported to the House that we hope to make sure that—

An Hon. Member: He broke the law.

Mr. Mulroney:—testing is done by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in the future. I think all of this represents a reasonable and appropriate response by the Minister and by the Government to a serious situation which we dealt with as quickly and as effectively as I think any Government could.

PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Mr. George Baker (Gander-Twilligate): Mr. Speaker, this morning during the Prime Minister's press conference the question was asked: "You are saying the cans of tuna should not have been on the shelves". The Prime Minister responded by saying "That's pretty damn obvious".

I would like to ask the Prime Minister is it not also obvious that in order to remedy the loss of confidence in the quality of fish sold in Canada and internationally it is not enough just to get rid of the cans of tuna but that he must get rid of the Minister of Fisheries.