

Mr. Bussières: —who request corrective adjustments to their returns. The over-all departmental objective is to take care of particular situations. This is one of the main objectives in the Department. I think the Member should be confident that, if there was inequity in that particular case, we will take steps to correct the situation.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair would ask the questioner to pose the question in general terms. If there is a specific case—

Mr. Nielsen: That is not correct. There will be a point of order about it.

Mr. Speaker: With all due respect to the Hon. Member, the rules of the House provide for questions to go on the Order Paper when specific information is demanded.

Mr. Andre: Yes, six years later.

Mr. Speaker: If the Hon. Member would place her supplementary question in general terms, I invite her to do so.

REQUEST THAT DEPARTMENT APOLOGIZE TO TAXPAYER

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I listened to what the Minister had to say about equity. I can assure him that seizing someone's personal bank account is not my definition of equity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: I would like the Minister, in a general sense, to tell me how many blunders against one single taxpayer does Revenue Canada have to commit before it has the grace and the dignity to offer that person an apology? When will an apology take place?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept such general remarks from the Hon. Member since she is referring to a specific case. One thing to keep in mind when an account is seized, in most cases, in all cases except perhaps in isolated cases, which is normal when millions of tax returns are processed, is that the taxpayer was negligent and failed to respond to a series of notices which the Department of National Revenue generally sends over a period of 90 days. He did not even bother to phone the district office and say: I am going through difficult times and, although you are quite properly authorized to take action under the law, I would like to sit down with you to see whether we might make some sort of arrangement.

When we do seize something, it is as a result of the taxpayer's failure to acknowledge our pressing invitations to give us his side of the story and provide us with the documents which would enable us to settle his case.

[*English*]

Miss MacDonald: It was the Department's mistake.

Oral Questions

Mr. McDermid: Now I know how out of touch you are, Bussières. You don't know what's going on. You haven't a clue.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS—UNITED STATES PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In light of U.S. President Reagan's speech yesterday in advance of the Stockholm Conference on Security and Disarmament, when he appealed for renewed "co-operation and progress for peace", does the Prime Minister see this speech as representing a change in policy for the Americans?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I, of course, cannot comment on whether it is a change in policy of the American Government. There does seem to be a different tone coming out from Washington, and we are very happy to hear it. Certainly we welcome the commitment President Reagan made in his speech on Monday, a commitment to genuine dialogue between East and West, and to his determination to approach the Stockholm Conference in a conciliatory spirit. This is welcome news, and we really hope the Soviet Union will respond in kind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FISHERIES

APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. On December 30 it was announced by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that it had appointed Kenneth C. Stein of Ottawa to a newly created position of Associate Deputy Minister in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The announcement of Mr. Stein's appointment raised great expectations of a major buy-back in the fishing industry in British Columbia. Considering the difficulty, and the long expectation that something would be done to assist the industry, could the Minister indicate whether the appointment of Mr. Stein was for the purpose of implementing a buy-back program, as suggested by the ministerial advisory committee and Mr. Cruikshank, or is it another way of stalling that announced buy-back program for another additional three months?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, no, the appointment of an Associate Deputy Minister in the Department is not a confirmation nor a denial of any program. The appointment of this new Associate Deputy Minister is the recognition of the added responsibilities of the Department. He is the third senior official to be