

immediately ordered changes in procedure to guard against a recurrence. Investigation is continuing into the possibility that an employee in our department was involved in a violation of the confidentiality provisions of the Income Tax Act. It must be appreciated that the department has 16,000 employees.

POSSIBILITY CONFIDENTIALITY OF MR. SPEAKER'S TAX INFORMATION HAS BEEN BREACHED

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. We now learn from the minister that he is in fact investigating that the RCMP has talked to Mr. Lillie. In view of the fact that just last Wednesday the Minister of National Revenue indicated in the House that the only cases that he was aware of where the confidential tax information of individuals had been passed on to unauthorized individuals were the four cases mentioned by Charles Templeton and Pierre Berton, may I ask the minister why it is necessary, with this two weeks of intensive investigation, for Canadians to learn who was responsible for this from the front pages of the *Globe and Mail*? Specifically, may I ask the minister whether he has conducted further investigations to see whether such individuals as the Speaker of the House of Commons and other persons have had their confidential tax information leaked to unauthorized individuals by his department?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, as I said last Friday, and as I have said many times before to the same hon. gentleman, I would rather the report had not appeared in the *Globe and Mail* because it would jeopardize the investigation which is taking place. When I explain it in that way I hope the hon. member will understand the meaning of it. In fact, I think anything we may say about this particular case may jeopardize what is now taking place. I have said this before and I will repeat it again and again.

● (1417)

POSSIBILITY OF UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS OBTAINING TAX INFORMATION

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the minister is concerned about having exposed is his own lack of knowledge about what is happening in his own department. When the House opened today the minister passed me a letter in reply to my questions about an interview on "As It Happens" with Mr. David Ingram of CEN-TA Tax Services of Vancouver. In the minister's letter he indicates that Mr. Ingram confirmed that for years he had been able to get tax information about his clients from the tax department without showing specific authorization. Is it the minister's position that because of the fact that Mr. Ingram was not obtaining this information for fraudulent purposes, in spite of the fact he could get the information without showing any authorization from the individual in question, it is impossible for a person posing as a chartered accountant but who is totally unauthorized and wants the

information for improper purposes to get that information from his department?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you that this question was placed to me on Friday. I told the hon. gentleman I would have an answer for him today. I have supplied him with a letter, and it is unfortunate that the hon. member either cannot read or does not understand the second paragraph in the letter. If I must, I will quote the letter in the House. Let me quote this part:

Mr. Ingram's allegations, like your own, are general and his examples so hypothetical that it is quite evidently incumbent upon him to support his generalities with specifics.

I suggest that is what the hon. member should also do. I stated in addition:

I will go over his interview point by point with that in mind.

I did that in the whole letter, and every point is defined in that letter I have given the hon. member. If he would take the time, and I know I gave it to him at two o'clock, to read the letter, he will find that the contents of that letter show that there is nothing behind the allegation.

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

ALLEGATION UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS HAVE ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I see that the minister is a little up tight because of his incompetency and the incompetency of his department, so let me pose my question to the President of the Treasury Board who I know is interested in the good and well wishes of all his employees. I will quote from the particular *Globe and Mail* article, and I see the Prime Minister does not care as he is smiling.

Mr. Trudeau: I am smiling at you.

Mr. Alexander: The article states:

Mr. Lillie and Mr. Meredith say they can get information from income tax returns, police records from the RCMP's computer in Ottawa, family allowance and unemployment insurance records, Canada Pension Plan files and change-of-address forms filed with the Post Office.

Having heard that, I wonder whether the minister is prepared to say now that this type of alleged statement coming from Lillie and Meredith would certainly necessitate an investigation under the Inquiries Act, and because of the ineffectiveness of the Postmaster General's inquiry, is the minister prepared to recommend that an inquiry under the Inquiries Act be implemented immediately in order to get to the bottom of this entire matter?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think the investigation by the Post Office department and the Postmaster General, as he has indicated, is proceeding in a beneficial way. I think the facts are going to