

Oral Questions

auditors to recover certain amounts of money was a policy I wanted to be perfectly clear to, and understood by, all the Department's district offices. That is why, when the Hon. Member raised his questions, I asked to have this policy position confirmed and repeated and explained again to the district offices and to ensure that the managers responsible at the district level see to it that the policy is properly implemented. This has been done, and I am sure that this policy is being followed by the Department and implemented by district officers.

[English]

GRIEVANCES FILED BY PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, you will note that the Minister carefully avoided answering the question again. This cover-up has to stop.

Will the Minister now answer that question, and will he answer the question which I put to him on December 21, when I asked at that time how many grievances had been filed by public service unions with regard to quotas, and in which municipalities those grievances had been filed? The Minister responded, "I will seek information and gladly report to the Hon. Member and the House." Will the Minister tell the House how many grievances have been filed and in which municipalities, as a result of these quotas being imposed on tax auditors?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asked me this question before. I would remind him that there are over 18,000 employees with the Department of National Revenue across Canada, from a sub-office in Rimouski to a district office as large as the one in Toronto.

The Hon. Member will understand that the division of management in a department of this size requires that responsibilities should be shared.

The Hon. Member asked me earlier whether I was listening to the question. I see he is now making comments to his neighbour while I am giving him my answer. I think that in line with the concerns of his Leader, which go beyond having the right haircut and trying to speak in a baritone, to include a concern for being civil, he should at least have the common decency to pay attention when he is getting an answer to his question.

I was saying that in a department of that size, management authority should be shared and that each employee should have responsibilities according to the level of responsibility of his job in the department, and I am happy to say that today, there was a meeting of senior departmental officials with union representatives of departmental employees at Revenue Taxation; I am told that the preliminary results of these discussions have been very productive and there will be opportunities for employee representatives and management to explain any con-

cerns that may exist with respect to certain quotas, and we intend to make it quite clear that we are not putting the burden on auditors who are represented by the Union of the Revenue Taxation Employees to recover a specific amount of money, but that we are following professional standards. I am convinced that results of this meeting will show Canadians that the Hon. Member and his colleagues are engaged in a witch hunt, the same as their Leader.

● (1430)

[English]

SEIZURE OF KINGSTON TAXPAYER'S BANK ACCOUNT

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I want some explanations from the Minister of National Revenue of Canada concerning the case of a Mrs. Moorby of Kingston, who paid \$5,000 in income tax in 1982, but the Department turned around and credited that payment to her husband's account. Then, after harassing her for a whole year, the Department discovered the mistake but—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has concern about raising a very specific issue and an account. It can be raised in general terms, but asking with regard to a specific tax problem is a concern to the Chair.

Mr. Nielsen: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Member could put the question in general terms.

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I have given the Minister a copy of this documentation. He should have it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Why, when the Department discovered its mistake did it seize her personal bank account, and why is this kind of bungling allowed to go on? Second, why does the Department not have the simple decency to offer Mrs. Moorby an apology for its mistakes, not hers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from the Hon. Member relating to that particular incident at 2.10 p.m. I think all Members will understand that I did not have time to inquire into the matter, and give an explanation of the situation. However, I would invite the Hon. Member to ask her colleague, who usually asks questions and who referred to a document prepared by the Department and made it public yesterday. He sent it over to me to read and a section of that document is entitled "Program Completion—Goals and Objectives". He will notice that in our district offices the objective is to provide timely service to taxpayers—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!