

Supply

case involved computer matching. Will the Minister give the House the assurance that his Department has not to date in any instance engaged in computer matching of information, to use the term which was used by the Privacy commissioner?

[Translation]

Mr. Bussières: Mr. Speaker, admittedly I had difficulty following the Commissioner's recommendation. This is an aspect now under review, and I understand there were further discussions between the Commissioner and my officials on that particular aspect, in order to identify the issue exactly and come to an understanding as to what the Commissioner meant concerning the Department's operations. Clearly, the Hon. Member is focusing on one aspect of the Commissioner's comments, but what is important is to have a good view of the issue. Taking, the first substantive issue, for instance the Commissioner's answer is clear. He stated:

[English]

The Privacy Commissioner stated:

The information sought by Revenue Canada from the municipal records of the City of Kitchener is relevant to the Department's operating programs of collecting taxes and determining compliance with the Income Tax Act. The collection of such personal information is authorized by Section 4 of the Privacy Act.

He concluded:

What is relevant is that any information obtained relate directly to an operating program of the Department—

In seeking such information from Kitchener, Revenue Canada did not violate the Privacy Act.

[Translation]

And he answers the three questions. Now, as I indicated at the beginning of my answer, when I last discussed this particular aspect with my deputy minister, he told me there would be further discussions between my Department and the Commissioner, in order to come to a clear understanding of the terms used and the substance of the issue.

[English]

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, you will note that the Minister did not answer the question, which was whether he could give the House the assurance that in the past there has not been computer matching of data as referred to by the Privacy Commissioner. I will not repeat that question, but I would simply draw to the attention of the Minister an article which appeared in the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* of last Saturday. In that article an official of his Department indicated that, in fact, such computer matching appears to have taken place in the past. I think the Minister should be aware of that fact.

Second, the Minister should also be aware of the fact that the Privacy Commissioner found that if, in fact, the Department had gained access to the computerized data from the City of Kitchener, the failure to have the information properly catalogued would have been in violation of the Act. I think he overlooked that fact.

I would like to ask the Minister about another matter which is under his jurisdiction. I draw to his attention a bulletin

called the *Special Investigations Bulletin*, which I believe was published in March, 1984. At the very same time there was a stable of very high-priced flacks revealing the public relations policies of the Government. In the bulletin there is an article headed "Department 'takes in' what Chinese 'took out'". It refers to the operations of a Chinese restaurant operator.

● (1230)

I want to ask the Minister whether he feels this sort of casual racist reference to Chinese in this way is appropriate in an official publications of his Department. A subsequent article entitled "Precious Metal Attracts Precious Taxes" deals with the file of a Brockville doctor. Why was it not necessary in that article to identify the doctor by his race or nationality when it was deemed necessary by his Department to identify the individual mentioned in the previous article as Chinese? Does he feel that this sort of reference is appropriate in official government documents? And does he not feel that this casual racism is something which should be prohibited?

[Translation]

Mr. Bussières: Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to this once I have clarified the point in the Privacy Commissioner's report concerning appropriate classification of information obtained. I indicated in my comments, perhaps too quickly, that the Department has already established new lists and new schedules, and that a representation will be made to Treasury Board to satisfy the concerns of the Commissioner with respect to the information obtained, so as to avoid any possible criticism by the Commissioner and to comply as strictly as possible with the various regulations and other provisions concerning information held on individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure about the document to which the Hon. Member referred but I do understand his question. In any case, and I say this without the slightest hesitation, any departmental document, whether public or internal, which has racist overtones is unacceptable. I cannot really judge the document until I have seen it, but as a general rule, I can assure the Hon. Member that any departmental document that would use expressions with racist overtones or make discriminatory remarks about a particular group is unacceptable, since this Government's principles and policies are clear on the subject, and all departments must, above all, comply with those policies and principles which are not only the policies and principles of this Government but also those of the House, as expressed on many occasions by the House itself.

[English]

Mr. Malone: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) much earlier talked about the need for a Taxpayers' Bill of Rights. Today he has again brought up the subject of the need for a Taxpayers' Bill of Rights. In responding a few moments ago the Minister wrapped himself in the Charter of Rights and submitted that somehow all of the rights and protections of citizens were wrapped up in that document.