

Of course, like any other riding, we have many ad hoc people's movements starting. They are starting, perhaps, in some neighbourhoods; but they spread across cities, provinces and across our country.

Women's groups are another example. Certainly, the ad hoc women's conference held in Ottawa a few months ago is a great example of women organizing on short notice and coming together. They had no help at all. What a help it would have been had they had phone privileges, mailing privileges and some help with travel expenses to come to that very important conference.

Of course, we also have many consumer groups. The latest is a very active organization of people fighting to protect their homes from the adverse effects of urea formaldehyde foam insulation. They are organizing in cities across the country, particularly in Vancouver, and are demanding government action to compensate them for the removal of this poisonous insulation from their homes.

These are all very worth-while groups which have a very important function. They are credible organizations which could become registered societies and establish that credibility. That should be available to them so they would have the advantages of income tax deductions and tax write-offs for donations to help them organize and carry out their important roles. These groups would also welcome aid of the kind mentioned in this bill, such as phone and travel services, and certainly help with getting out regular newsletters to their members and to others to tell them about the issues which concern them, the kind of programs they are developing and the need for action at various levels of government.

Mr. Jarvis: This is an NDP filibuster! They are against volunteers.

Mrs. Mitchell: This is not an NDP filibuster.

Mr. Jarvis: It certainly is. It has been 20 minutes so far.

Mrs. Mitchell: I am certainly in support of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jarvis: You are against the bill.

Mrs. Mitchell: I would like to say that I began some of this action, and was supported by the Conservative members during the Conservative government—

Mr. Jarvis: This is hypocrisy.

Mrs. Mitchell: —which developed a voluntarism committee which certainly supported some of the points I am raising.

Mr. Jarvis: You are not supporting this bill.

Mrs. Mitchell: Contrary to the quibbling from my colleague to my right—

Mr. Jarvis: I am not quibbling.

Registered Charities

Mrs. Mitchell: —my party and I do support the principles of Bill C-233, Mr. Speaker. We feel it is very important that the aid in kind, which will be available if this bill is implemented, and if the commission can convince the government that this is necessary, this must be made available to low-income self-help groups, to consumer groups, to non-profit co-operatives and to other non-profit societies which are sometimes involved in non-partisan social action.

● (1650)

This requires action in addition to this bill, which perhaps the same commission could undertake to broaden and perhaps to give a more democratic interpretation of registered charities under the Income Tax Act. It also requires a reform of the income tax system itself. This was recommended through the give-take tax proposal to encourage tax donations for those organizations whose greatest need is for ongoing funds as well as for health and aid in kind.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief because of the extended speech my friend to the left has delivered. She said that this bill does not go far enough in the objectives that she would have us follow. But I say to her that it is better to have half a loaf than to spend 20 minutes trying to break a whole one.

I presume the government will talk out this bill because we have had no comment at all from the member from Mississauga directed toward this bill or the reasons why there might be some objections on the part of the government to the bill. In view of the worth-while initiative expressed by my friend from Waterloo, I thought the government side would at least have had the courtesy to address the intent of the bill so we would know how we might move in future to meet these objections of the government in trying to achieve those worth-while objectives of the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean).

Canada is particularly blessed to have the strength of the volunteer sector in this country. It dates from our pioneer days when the whole tradition of self-help was developed as we rolled back the frontier. It is very difficult to maintain in the type of society that we have, as was pointed out by my friend, the hon. member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher), particularly in the large urban communities when so many other things are happening around us.

I want to support one element of the bill in particular which I think is very important in view of the oppressive power of government in society today, as it relates to funding, namely the financial support of charitable and volunteer organizations. What we see in the directions that have been proposed toward a change in the treatment of donations to charitable organizations is a means of withdrawing some of the financial support directly from government to support that is indirect, and in so doing to give these organizations a means whereby they can develop a greater degree of independence. If they can convince their fellow citizens of the merit of the services they wish to provide, then they are able to go ahead within their own mandate and with their own supporters to provide that service rather than to rely on governments.