

Volunteer Firemen

at work and they must go immediately to answer the call of a fire. They may be dressed in their good clothes or sports clothes, which may be damaged in the course of fighting the fire. There is no deduction given under the Income Tax Act for those expenses.

In the past I have asked the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) to consider giving a special status to volunteer firemen who serve their community year in and year out, receive no allowance and therefore do not receive the benefit of the \$500 deduction under the Income Tax Act. In my view it would show the appreciation Canadians have for volunteer firemen.

The Minister has asked how this provision would be implemented. It could be implemented by a clerk of any municipality, on the authority of a fire chief, stating that a given fireman has served 100 per cent or 80 per cent of the time throughout that year. In the latter case he would get 80 per cent of the income tax deduction provided for under the present Act.

I do not plan to speak further, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in the past on this motion. I know there are many interested people who would like to see this particular motion passed in the House. I will allow it to be debated by others here today.

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this subject, not only as a private Member, but as a representative of all the Conservative Members of the Official Opposition. We have continually supported the idea of this motion in principle. We intend to do that today. We hope we will not face the same kind of filibuster or talking out that this particular piece of legislation in the form of a Private Member's Bill or motion has received in the past. I would like to give two examples of what I hope will not happen today to kill this piece of work which has been done by the Member who is interested in this subject and who has spoken very well of the concern she has for volunteer firemen.

I would like to refer to *Hansard* of July 16, 1982, at page 19431. At that time the Hon. Member for South West Nova (Miss Campbell) first moved this motion with exactly the same wording. At that time we spoke in support of it. As we approached the end of the designated hour, something which had happened before happened again. The Liberal Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher) proceeded to talk the motion out. It was brought to the attention of the House but we did not wish to talk it out. However, the time passed and the motion died.

In 1983, as indicated on page 22009 of *Hansard* the same Liberal Member for Mississauga North, who was then the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, followed the same procedure. We spoke in support of the deduction for volunteer firemen, but the Member for Mississauga North, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, stood up to talk it out again. Even after the late Member for Nepean-Carleton, Mr. Baker, asked that it not be talked out, the Member for Mississauga North continued on. He said:

On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I thank the representatives of the other two Parties for making their position so clear and for their willingness to move

ahead on this. However, I suggest it is probably much better to simply pass along our enthusiasm to the Minister of Finance and leave it at that.

At that point the time ran out and again the motion died. You do not have to give me the fast sign on this because we have an hour set aside for debate on this motion. As I pointed out in my opening remarks, we are not going to use the designated time we have.

I would like to reiterate that there is a need for consideration to be given to a deduction for volunteer firemen. I am sure members of the New Democratic Party are of the same opinion. We are not looking forward to the same thing taking place as occurred in 1982 and in 1983. I am sure that the Member who brought this motion forward hopes that the same procedure is not followed today.

• (1710)

As a reeve of a municipality in the northern part of Peterborough County that had a volunteer fire fighting organization and as a warden of the 18 municipalities of Peterborough County, I can say that this proposal is long overdue. I hope that when I sit down no one else will stand up at ten minutes after five and that this motion can be sent to committee. Witnesses can be called, if necessary, and the concerns of the Government can be expressed as well as those of the Opposition, both NDP and Conservative.

We can do some fine tuning to the intent of this resolution, but let us not see a reoccurrence of 1982 and 1983 when we heard platitudes from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance when government Members were really talking out the motion.

I congratulate the Hon. Member who brought in this motion and offer our support from this side for its speedy passage. As private Members I believe we can work rapidly on this and refer it to committee. I would be very pleased to second the motion, if it is so put, that the subject matter be referred immediately to the Finance Committee for consideration and adoption by the Government with the support of both opposition Parties.

Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin-Swan River): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP I want to address this very important issue of the income tax deductions for volunteer firemen. Like the previous speaker, I come from a constituency where the role of the volunteer firemen is extremely important because of their contribution to our community. Other members of my Party have also spoken on this matter and have urged that the Government take action to ensure that volunteer firemen are able to make deductions from their income tax for the kinds of expenses that they have incurred.

I know that my colleague, the Hon. Member for Kootenay West (Mr. Kristiansen), has addressed this issue and stressed the importance of this type of measure being put in place. He spoke to an earlier motion put by the same Member who raised this concern today. I want to emphasize that our Party has been supportive of this measure.