

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy today to be able to say a few words to the motion before the House. I compliment my friend, the Hon. Member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean) on the motion. I believe we are discussing something today which is of great importance to Canadian life and to every Canadian. The Hon. Member for Waterloo has proposed:

That this House condemns the Government for its failure to honour the commitment made both in 1974 and 1981 by Canada's Secretary of State to develop, in co-operation with the voluntary sector, a comprehensive government action policy with respect to the voluntary sector and urges the Government to provide an immediate incentive to Canada's 40,000 registered charities by implementing the give and take tax credit proposal.

I feel that we have had a good day in the House, Mr. Speaker. I have not been here for all of the debate, but I believe the mood which has been demonstrated by the Hon. Members of all three Parties indicates that we are moving ahead with something which I personally feel is very important, that is, the whole question of voluntary associations and how they operate within our country.

Basically, what the Hon. Member for Waterloo is proposing is that this very valuable work in Canadian society be rewarded, more or less, and those who are taking part, by having a very clearly defined tax break. Those who give to voluntary organizations will have an immediate return, not unlike the return to persons who give to political parties today, which I believe has been a great advance in the whole political system of Canada. I would like to say a little about the historical development of this whole notion of voluntarism, the notion that our Canadian life runs and has run on the idea that people are ready to volunteer to help each other prepare and make a better society. I would like to reflect for a few moments on my own life history.

I was born in western Canada on the Prairies in Rosetown, Saskatchewan. My father was a pioneer. He came to the west early in the 1900s, as thousands of other people came from eastern Canada, from Europe and from the United States. They came to a literally barren land in which there was nothing but open space and lots of sky. There was land, and they were able to take out a quarter section of land, 160 acres, in their own names. Some of them made a success of it and some did not. Some of them were farmers and some were not. However, when the peoples of the world arrived, established and set up the communities of western Canada, they did it basically through their voluntary organizations. If you drive through western Canada now you can see what happened. When people arrived there they did not know each other but they knew they could not survive unless they helped each other. You see the churches and the schools on the Prairies, although most of the schools established in the early days on a voluntary basis are now gone. I went to one of those little one-room schools, as have thousands of others. They were the beginnings of Canadian life in that part of the country. When you talk to the pioneers, it was a rich life even though they had great hardships. It was rich because they worked together in these voluntary organizations. They had their music and drama clubs and other things four or five years after they

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arrived. My life, and that of many others in the House of Commons, has been shaped and formed by the voluntary sector of our land.

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Today we are talking about specific areas in which the voluntary sector can be improved. I have a feeling from listening to what has been going on today that that is going to happen. It may not be perfect and immediate, but it is moving. I think that is very positive because everyone here knows from personal experience that what we are talking about is extremely important.

I am a Catholic Priest and I have lived most of my life in the voluntary sector, the church. The same is true of the Hon. Member who moved the motion. He is a Protestant Minister and he has lived in that part of society. This is part and parcel of what I am all about, it is a way of doing what I am going to put simply as loving your neighbour. That is a simple mandate, given to everyone. The whole world knows that is what we are supposed to do. How do you love your neighbour today in this complicated society? The motion talks about that and it helps us to do it better.

The voluntary sector has to be financed, Mr. Speaker. We all know there was a period of time when everyone in Canada could get a standard \$100 deduction for purposes of their taxes. The Department simply found it too complicated, I suppose, to take every little donation and add it up; it just said let us take it for granted that every Canadian is that interested and given at least \$100. Well, the last Budget eliminated that deduction. The voluntary sector said that it should be taken out, it was not true that every Canadian gave \$100. On the other hand, they asked that for every dollar given to a voluntary organization, there be a tax benefit of 50 cents. When the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) produced his last Budget he was quick to take out the \$100 but he did not give the tax credit. Today the Hon. Member for Waterloo is asking that the second part be respected, and I hope the task force looks at this seriously. If that is done, the whole process of the voluntary sector will improve. The Government will not suffer because more money will flow into that sector. This will be a saving in the end for the Government itself.

Going back to the question of why I believe what we are doing today is so important, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer again to the idea of love your neighbour. By good fortune we have agencies who are doing that. We can become part and parcel of that work by stretching out our hands and helping other people, loving other people, by helping the organizations who are doing just that in the modern world. On the Prairies where I grew up it was easy to know your neighbour; he was a half a mile down the road. Everyone knew the people in small towns in the district, they knew who was sick, who did not have food. But today it is not so easy.

The question today is, who is my neighbour? Who is my neighbour where I live, who is my neighbour in my province, my country or in the international community? That is the question we have to address. Being active in the church at one