

the moment, women are occupying that service demanding that it be reinstated with adequate government funding. We do not want to see this happen in other sectors. I know that most volunteers would not want this to happen either.

Thus, we must define in this committee the appropriate role of volunteers. I would like to see some real supports which would help volunteer organizations. I know that many groups are advocacy groups and they are essential. I am speaking of tenant organizations, anti-poverty groups, consumer groups and environmental groups which are working for reforms and, perhaps, taking small "p" political action. It has been very difficult for Governments to give these organizations the type of objective help they need in the way of funding. It has been difficult for many of them to be classified as charitable organizations so that donations they receive can be income tax deductible. We must recognize the many volunteers who are involved in the peace movement which, again, performs an important function. I wish to recognize the number of women who are dedicated to this type of movement. I have mentioned the environmental movement and the involvement of groups of all kinds, including unions. Incidentally, the solidarity protest we had in British Columbia reached out and involved networks of volunteers in every community. They advocated progressive changes. They protested the type of services that were being cut back, which was hurting people and which is still hurting the people of British Columbia.

I am sure we will be discussing all of these measures in committee. I will not take more time tonight to go into the matter further. I just wish to reiterate that volunteers must never replace essential public services. I think we need to define what we mean by private agencies. They are sometimes called voluntary agencies, although they are operated with paid staffs. We need to clarify what we mean by those words. We need to recognize in every positive way we can the outstanding contribution of volunteers across Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Lanthier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** It is a pleasure, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, to reply to the motion presented by the Hon. Member for Argenteuil-Papineau (Mrs. Bourgault) and to emphasize the importance of the volunteer sector in Canadian society, something on which I am sure all Members of this House are in agreement.

Many federal departments have ongoing contacts with volunteer organizations, either as a way to facilitate social action or to promote various policies. The Department of the Secretary of State has programs that are concerned exclusively with volunteer organizations. It has a national budget of \$480,000, plus \$300,000 for a regional component. The program provides support for 16 national and nearly 100 provincial and territorial organizations.

We feel that the Secretary of State's voluntary action program plays an essential role in supporting social action,

community development, economic development and the creation of volunteer organizations.

The Department also has a program for participation by the disabled, which has a national budget of about \$430,000 and a regional budget totalling \$287,000. This program provides assistance to four national organizations, which include the Coalition of the Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Association for the Hearing Handicapped and the Canadian Association for Legal Assistance, Information and Research for the Disabled. The program for participation by the disabled supports volunteer organizations for the disabled and provides financial assistance for projects promoting their full and active participation in our society.

We see these programs as examples of the kind of projects our Government is promoting in the volunteer sector. The Department of National Health and Welfare also has support programs for community groups, which are very well known and very useful. In addition to its supportive role, designed so as not to undermine the self-sufficiency of the volunteer sector, the Canadian Government has played a major part in resolving the difficulties arising from our tax structure and the structure of Government services that are particularly problematic for the volunteer sector.

There has been one issue in particular that was of some concern to the volunteer sector, namely the definition of "political activities", because it meant that certain charitable organizations were unable to be recognized as such for tax purposes, while others were concerned they might lose their status.

Members of the House will recall that this question was dealt with and quite clearly explained by the Minister of National Revenue last May 29 in Vancouver. The Income Tax Act provides that all the resources of a charitable organization must be used for the charities of the organization itself. Therefore any charitable organization getting involved in political activities may very well lose its acquired status. Charitable organizations then began to fear that the simple fact of telling Members of their choice their point of view on certain issues might be considered as a political activity likely to warrant the loss of their indispensable status.

In contemporary society it has become obvious that militancy, on the part of non-government organizations or individuals, is now a central element of our democratic organization.

Therefore it was a decisive step for charitable organizations when the Minister of National Revenue announced that he would allow non-partisan political activities and would consult with charitable organizations before going ahead with his current projects. In short, henceforth a charitable organization will be allowed to express its views to elected representatives of its choice inasmuch as the issue in question relates to the charitable activities of the organization. There is no question