

Supply

today on behalf of voluntary organizations in Canada and, lo and behold, the Minister made a speech in which he announced he is going to provide an extra \$200,000. I do not know where this extra \$200,000 came from. It has not been explained. There is supposed to be a shortage of money. However, I congratulate the Hon. Member for Waterloo for his motion. If he would only do this five days in a row, he would have a million dollars for the voluntary organizations in Canada. It just shows you, Mr. Speaker, the power of Parliament.

I want to remind you, Sir, that this motion in the name of the Hon. Member for Waterloo calls for:

—the Government to provide an immediate incentive to Canada's 40,000 registered charities by implementing the give and take tax credit proposal.

The Hon. Member for Waterloo is not asking for a handout. He is asking for an incentive in order that voluntary organizations may be enabled to grow in the fullness of their potential for service to Canada. That is a very important distinction, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that what the Government has done in responding is a sort of cover-up operation. The \$200,000 is going to get the headlines and then there is going to be a committee set up, a joint committee of both Houses, to study the question of how far voluntary organizations can go in advocating government policies.

That, of course, is a very controversial question and does need to be studied. However, the Minister knows perfectly well that our Party has been calling for a committee study, a task force study by Parliament, by the Government, not just on the question of advocacy, as important as that is, but a study which would include an examination of tax credit proposals. The Government has rejected that tax credit proposal, and I think this committee is probably going to have a very difficult time in following the terms of reference laid down in the Government motion. It is going to have a very difficult time in opening up the question of whether or not the give and take proposal of the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations is financially credible.

● (1230)

The Government has shirked its duty, Mr. Speaker, in bringing in a Budget last year which took one half of the give and take tax proposal. It removed the \$100 tax deduction without bringing in the tax credit. Then it refused to have a study carried out of the tax credit proposal in setting up this committee. And now it adds insult to injury by saying to the voluntary organizations—and the Minister has probably gone to them right now to make a speech at their luncheon in order to get another headline—that we are going to give you \$200,000; aren't we wonderful people? I submit, Sir, that this is a totally inadequate response to the needs of voluntary organizations.

I refer you, Mr. Speaker, and Members of the House to *Hansard* of June 9, 1980, pages 1898 to 1901, where I am reported to have moved a Private Member's Motion calling for the Government to apply the give and take proposal. The heart of my contention was that the Government would come out

ahead financially if it implemented the elimination of the \$100 standing deduction and gave a 50 per cent tax credit for donations to registered charities, of whom there are in excess of 40,000 in Canada. I gave figures, which to this day have never been refuted, which show that over a period of four to eight years the Government would come out ahead.

This proposal is serious, it is affordable, yet the Government's financial experts have been telling people in the Department, who, I am led to believe, are in favour of the implementation of this proposal, that we cannot afford it. I submit again that it is an affordable proposal when everything is taken into consideration.

We have to consider the jobs created by voluntary organizations as they expand their community service. The Minister said today that there are 175,000 jobs directly related to their work. There would be a lot more jobs if voluntary organizations achieved their full potential. I say to you, Sir, that implementation of this proposal, as called for in the motion, would provide an incentive for charitable giving to all taxpayers, many of whom have no incentive at all. In addition, it would make the tax incentives as equitable as possible among all income groups. Currently, higher income taxpayers have a greater incentive than lower income taxpayers. The Hon. Member for Waterloo gave many examples of that, and there are many other examples which could be used to buttress the point. Finally, increased tax incentives would strengthen voluntary organizations.

Who are these people we are talking about Mr. Speaker? Is it some little sideline of Canadian life? Not at all. We are talking about people who go right to the heart of the quality of life, a quality of life that no government of any political stripe can ever hope to foster. As I said in 1980:

There are organizations for the disadvantaged within Canada, the poor, the sick and the needy. There are organizations for all groups, from children to the aged. There are health organizations for research and heart and lung disease, cancer, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, health services for the mentally or physically handicapped. There are religious organizations sustaining and preserving our spiritual values, be they Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Islamic or Buddhist. There are international development organizations providing basic needs to people in the developing countries. There are educational organizations for universities, colleges, adult education, child education, future studies. There are environmental organizations for the preservation and beautification of our air, land, water and cities. There are cultural organizations for native and ethnic groups for art, music and dance. Some voluntary organizations serve national needs, others serve local communities. Many of these needs cannot be met by government or business.

The benefits of voluntary activity extend to the participants, recipients and the community as a whole. For the participant, voluntary activity is a means to become involved in his or her community at a time when other community ties such as the family and the work place are being eroded. Voluntary activity helps a person to develop into a better, happier human being with a greater sense of purpose and understanding.

That was the heart of my submission almost four years ago in urging the Government to implement the give and take tax proposal, Mr. Speaker. I want to emphasize again my sense of real concern that the Government did not do that in the Budget of last year. I am concerned that the Government, in setting the criteria for the terms of reference for the joint committee on voluntary organizations, is not going to study this financial question. I am concerned about the Minister