

*Supply—National Revenue*

• (3:00 p.m.)

**The Deputy Chairman:** The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

(*Translation*)

**Mr. Mongrain:** Mr. Chairman, at the outset I wish to extend my most sincere thanks to the representatives of the New Democratic Party and the Raillieement Cr ditiste who agreed to let me have the floor now because I must leave the house this afternoon for very serious reasons.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to say that the two independent members here appreciate the consideration which the house has shown them up to now in some trying circumstances. I see that respect for minorities has become a reality, possibly because some are saying to themselves that one of these days they might also be a minority. But, in any case, that respect exists, and I am very happy about it.

I hasten to add that I do not intend to take advantage of my colleagues' indulgence because I have only one thing to say.

All the more so, since I heard the minister tell us a little earlier that he was scared himself to see how efficient his department is. Imagine then how careful we must be ourselves if we must deal with that matter.

I would like to draw the minister's attention to one point. I get—and I think that other members do also—quite a lot of mail in which people complain about the way the minister's officials deal with the receipts for charitable donations. I know that it is an extremely difficult matter to settle. As a matter of fact, I had the opportunity to see that the minister takes that matter seriously, but I think that the standards that have been set are not realistic.

I even feel that to oblige the members of the clergy, of any denomination whatsoever, to give receipts for every donation, constitutes, in my opinion, interference in a field which should normally be surrounded with secrecy; by asking them to do that, we make their task much more difficult.

I saw myself lately income tax returns which had been sent back and in which large cuts had been made with regard to charitable donations, and it seems to me that those cuts are not always very realistic.

Would it not be possible to go back, within reasonable limits, to that practice—even if it was too generous in the past—of setting a percentage which would be allowed without

receipts, because there are always charitable or welfare campaigns in our municipalities for which there is no opportunity of asking for receipts. There are all kinds of charitable organizations, card parties, public subscriptions, etc.

I am thinking in particular about the head of a large family with children of 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and sometimes more who are still studying and whom he has to support financially. His charitable donations, which he pays himself, are multiplied by four, five, six and sometimes they are multiplied by ten. Then, when he asks why the amount he claimed for charitable donations has been reduced, he is given this answer: if you want us to accept your figures, send us receipts. That is not always practical, nor possible.

I think I am not the only one who will raise the matter in the house, but I believe that the minister should, if my suggestion is in order, set up some kind of special committee to consider that situation, which would give a hearing especially to representatives of all charitable organizations, bona fide social organizations, in short representatives of all religions who might have justified representations to make on that matter.

It has been alleged, Mr. Chairman, that the committees of the house are overworked, and that, consequently, it was useless to set up any more. I have my doubts about that. It may be that a few committees have too much work, but I believe there are others that are not overworked. I could mention two or three—three committees—I am on, where a meeting has not been called more than twice since the beginning of the session. These could surely work a little harder. The fact that some members are not overworked was demonstrated recently in a news report where it is said that some arrogant young members are threatening to start a revolution within their party. Well, it might be more profitable to keep them busy, say, in the field under discussion, the automobile industry, and it would be a good thing to set up a special committee for all concerned to discuss charitable donations.

That would provide an opportunity to consider, not donations or subscriptions of \$10, \$15, \$20 or \$25,000 for which it is easy to get a receipt, but rather to discuss the case of small wage earners who distribute their donations by quarters or dollar bills. Everyone knows that charitable campaigns are very popular. And the little man has to finance a