

Income Tax Act

trade-offs involved. Suppose we invest this sum in the give and take tax credit. We would end up generating two new charitable dollars for each dollar this Government forgoes in revenue. This money would flow directly into the voluntary sector. It would create more stable jobs than the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) is capable of imagining. Instead of a type of quick-fix, there would be an investment in long-term job creation in Canada's most labour-intensive sector. There would be no further manipulation of our voluntary organizations for the sake of this Government's electoral timetable.

There is time, not much time but still some time, for this Government to reconsider. Indeed, the next Budget may be its last chance. On behalf of Hon. Members on this side, I urge the Government to move toward implementing the give and take proposals without delay. No action could be more constructive and more cost effective for a government that truly believes in and supports voluntary action, a government whose Throne Speech has referred to "Canada's massive diverse and vital voluntary sector". The three million Canadians who participate in the voluntary sector are watching to see the reaction of this Government. Increasingly that sector is communicating to itself. It recognizes there are now 373 million hours of voluntary labour representing over \$2 billion. The Government's response to the give and take will demonstrate once and for all whether those remarks in the Throne Speech are just cynical rhetoric or whether it really is a death-bed repentance.

● (1430)

Mr. Fisher: Mr. Speaker, we have heard once again a heated presentation from the Hon. Member and I think we should commend him for his perseverance on this topic. He is always ready to present his ideas quite eloquently even if he mixes those ideas up with a little political rhetoric from time to time.

During his speech, the Hon. Member said that he was speaking on behalf of the members on his side of the House. Does that mean that an endorsement of the give and take proposal is an official policy of his Party?

Mr. McLean: Mr. Speaker, in the House and out, I have indicated that that is the decision of our caucus. I have spoken to the Secretary of State (Mr. Joyal) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) in committee regarding that matter. I have said that if the Government will bring in that proposal, we will support it and its implementation. That was said before the last Budget was brought down. Representations were made in committee. That question is not in debate.

The Parliamentary Secretary has indicated that those ideas are my ideas. Let me say that while I do endorse those ideas, they are also endorsed by the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations.

Mr. Fisher: What is your Party's position?

Mr. McLean: Our Party has reviewed those ideas very carefully and we believe they are based upon the same principle of incentive which we have indicated is so important for the small business sector and the principle that the voluntary sector does not need more grants but needs to be able to make its own determination with less government involvement. That the Parliamentary Secretary is in doubt about where this Party stands on this matter, after the months we have been advocating, reviewing and supporting the proposals that have come from the National Voluntary Organizations, is somewhat amazing to me.

Mr. Fisher: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that I have managed to amaze the Hon. Member this afternoon. However, I was amazed when, on December 11, a Calgary newspaper published a story which indicated that the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) had said in an interview that his Party would not present any position on any topic at all because it did not want the Liberals to steal its ideas. I presume that the Hon. Member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean) is taking a different tack today. At least he is ready to be specific and I commend his approach rather than the one taken by the Hon. Member for Yukon.

I would like to ask a follow-up question. If his Party has examined these proposals and contends that a more vigorous voluntary sector will result, that a more vigorous voluntary sector will take the pressure off government services, then is the Hon. Member saying that he supports a transfer of funds from grants whenever the tax expenditure starts to grow? For example, would voluntary arts groups that start to claim more and more in the form of tax expenditures support the diminishment of grants for arts activities from the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications (Mr. Fox)?

Mr. McLean: Mr. Speaker, let me deal first with the last point raised by the Parliamentary Secretary. All along, the matter at the root of this has been the suggestion that we be free to make our own decisions. The Parliamentary Secretary has come right to the nub of the matter. The voluntary sector, whether it be in arts and culture, caring, recreation, amateur sports, religion or international aid, would like to be able to plan ahead. It would like to be able to know that it can raise money, that it is not dependent and that it has the Government as a silent partner. It recognizes that that will then leave it with the responsibility to sell its product and involve more citizens in its activities.

We must recognize the realities. After all, these three million Canadians who volunteer their time are some of the most cost-conscious people in the country. They know the worth of their time. They are the ones who are most critical of big government spending. They are telling us that they would be prepared to recognize the realities of today's world and they believe that when government spends a dollar, they can do the same thing for about 35 cents or 40 cents.

Let us be quite clear about the red herring raised by the Parliamentary Secretary regarding the stealing of ideas. We are espousing an idea that was put forward by a major sector