

Supply

Mr. Hawkes: Quite a few.

Mr. Flis: Members of the Opposition may take advantage of Opposition Days. How many full Opposition Days have been devoted to debating this topic?

We in the House hear quite often from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) that business, labour and Government must work together to build a future for the young people of the country. I am very pleased that the voluntary sector was recognized in the last Speech from the Throne. I am pleased that in the last Budget, the Minister of Finance recognized the important contribution of the voluntary sector. It is the voluntary sector which also provides jobs, affordable housing, important cultural centres in which young people meet, scholarships and education to those who might not be able to afford it.

I am very pleased that we are debating this topic, and I am also very pleased that the Hon. Secretary of State (Mr. Joyal) announced this morning the establishment of the parliamentary task force to examine the question of fiscal incentives for charitable giving and the definition of charities under the Income Tax Act.

In debate today, we heard many questions. What is a charitable organization? What is a non-profit organization? How should contributions be recognized and rewarded? Should they be rewarded through the tax credit system, through deductions from income tax, through the 50 per cent proposal which we just heard, through the grant system? I think the job of this task force will be to explore questions such as those.

An important question was asked by the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp); what the legitimate activity of a recognized charity was. I think this question will have to be explored. The Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) reminded us, and rightly so, that we must ask what the role of a charitable organization is. Is it serving the broad public good or is it simply that of a non-profit organization which serves a very narrow group of citizens? These will not be easy questions for the combined Senate and House of Commons task force to answer.

When the topic of the voluntary sector arose today, I asked my parliamentary assistant to send to the Chamber a list of all such organizations in Parkdale-High Park. We all have such organizations on our mailing lists and keep in touch with them. It is when one puts them all together that one realizes the impact of voluntary organizations on our ridings.

I was sent a list of the ethno-cultural groups in Parkdale-High Park. There are 35 such groups in a little community like Parkdale-High Park. These groups range all the way from the Council of National Ethnocultural Organizations of Canada, which represents 26 different ethno-cultural groups, to the Chinese National League, the Czechoslovak National Association of Canada, the United Croats of Canada, the Greek Community Metro Toronto Incorporated, the Italian Canadian Association, the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association, the Baltic Federation in Canada, the Lithuanian Canadian

Community, the Latvian National Federation in Canada, the Estonian Central Council of Canada to the Maltese-Canadian Society. The list goes on and on. I have not even mentioned the largest ethno-cultural groups in the Riding of Parkdale-High Park which include the Filipino, Ukrainian and Polish organizations.

I am very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, in that the head offices of many of these organizations are located in the Riding of Parkdale-High Park. I am very pleased that, for example, the Ukrainian Canadian Committee of Ontario has its head office in Parkdale-High Park. I am very pleased that the Canadian Polish Congress has its head office right in the centre of my constituency. The Polish Alliance of Canada has its head office right in the heart of my riding.

This brings us to the question of what is a national organization. After listening to some Hon. Members this afternoon, I would think that they would define these organizations as being ones which did not serve the general good across Canada. These organizations have representation right across Canada and most of them follow a democratic process. The presidents of these organizations must be elected at either annual or biannual conventions. They are responsible to their electorate just as we are responsible to ours. That means that national organizations are very democratic organizations. They account for every penny they spend. I think other institutions could learn from these organizations.

My assistant sent over lists of other organizations. For example, she sent over a list of all the senior citizens' groups in my riding. There are 10 different senior citizens' groups in the riding of Parkdale-High Park. These include the Sampaguita senior citizens' club, the Parkdale Golden Age Club, the Over 50 Club and the Golden Years Club. Again, each of the ethno-cultural groups I have already mentioned have senior citizens' clubs.

My assistant sent me a list of the business and ratepayers' groups. These groups are non-profit, but are they charitable groups? Some of the business improvement associations such as the Parkdale Business Improvement Association, are trying to improve the environment along Queen Street. This will hopefully bring in more business, boost the economy of the area and create more jobs. However, these organizations do more than that. They provide scholarships in the neighbourhood schools. They make donations to help those who need help most.

How do we define these organizations? Are they strictly non-profit commercial organizations or are they charitable institutions? The Bloor West Village Businessmen's Association which is located in my riding does all of these things. What about the churches? There are close to 40 churches in the riding of Parkdale-High Park, most of which have a parish council of one form or another. These churches have helped to bring refugees to Canada in general and to Toronto in particular. They have helped the boat people, the Polish refugees, refugees from Guyana and refugees from other parts of the world. How do we define organizations which are connected with the churches? It is easy to define a church but