

On the other hand, not every one who has made representations to the Minister of Finance is wholly in favour of the principle of this resolution. It might be better to say they may be in favour of the principle, but have concerns of their own. We have also heard there are other volunteer people, some of whom are active in rather hazardous occupations, who have expenses somewhat analogous to those incurred by volunteer firemen. We have had representations from some volunteer groups that their volunteers should have a comparable allowance and they should have it before that of the firemen goes up. I mention this only as a matter of information.

I would like to comment on the first part of the hon. member's motion, the proposal that the indemnity of volunteer firemen not be included in taxable income. Here I share at least a question with the hon. member for Brampton-Georgetown (Mr. McDermid), that this is a part of the proposal that should win less instant acclaim than the second part of the proposal. It certainly does raise a principle which, if applied here, no matter how great the contribution of volunteer firemen is, and I agree it is very great, raises a principle that could be applied elsewhere and be extended perhaps indefinitely. Having said that, having raised the question, I would again congratulate the hon. member on his initiative and on his commitment in bringing forward this motion.

● (1740)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rémi Bujold (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak on the motion, and first, to commend the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Caouette) for bringing it forward. When we think of the constituency and the area represented by our colleague, I understand his reasons for doing so, aware as he is of the problems and difficulties faced by the majority of small municipalities and also by larger centres in absorbing the cost of a fire brigade. Such a proposal will allow municipalities to see that the government accept, and support, the voluntary work done at the local level, which is totally acceptable. Each and everyone of us should commend the hon. member and see to it that the government implements this as soon as possible.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, in smaller municipalities and particularly in eastern Quebec and the Gaspé Peninsula, where most communities average between 2,000 and 8,000 population, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide fire fighting at the ratepayers' costs.

The availability of volunteer firemen provides security for those people, the knowledge that in case of fire, at any hour of the day, they can count on people from their own area. This is why the motion put forward by my colleague from Abitibi deserves support. Some may be concerned with the \$1,000 income tax deduction, but it must be realized that not all municipalities can count on people like company presidents or lawyers or doctors to serve as volunteer firemen in the normal course of life. Their duties preclude this and I feel it is to be

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expected rather than that people with more leisure time should provide this kind of voluntary service. For this reason I do not believe that a \$1,000 deduction would unsettle or contradict the famous principle referred to by my colleague from York East, the fact that such a deduction could apply in other fields of society.

I therefore am in total agreement with the motion put forward by my colleague from Abitibi, on both items involved, that of excluding from taxable income any allowance received by a volunteer fireman and of allowing for a \$1,000 deduction from their revenues, which could encourage a greater number of individuals in our small municipalities to co-operate in these volunteer firemen groups. In this way, the Canadian government would recognize and encourage the people in our small municipalities to volunteer their services in order to provide security for all their fellow citizens.

Mr. René Cousineau (Gatineau): Mr. Speaker, I wish to take just a few moments to support my hon. colleague from Abitibi and commend him on the motion he has presented today. If there is somebody who is underestimated in our society, it is certainly the fireman and particularly the volunteer fireman. He is the first to be on the spot every time there is a fire or a problem threatening the community's security. Mr. Speaker, this motion is commendable and I repeat that I strongly support it. I suggest that the government proceed with it as soon as possible in order to give benefits to this group of individuals who do a great service to their fellow citizens every day.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Ittinuar (Nunatsiaq): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to support the hon. gentleman's motion on volunteer firemen. All our firemen in Nunatsiaq are volunteers. Last year in Frobisher Bay, alone, a town of 2,500 people, there were no fewer than seven fire-related deaths. A school in my home town of Rankin Inlet was destroyed by fire. In Eskimo Point a power station was destroyed by fire. Three further deaths in Rankin Inlet last year were related to fire, revealing a lack of adequate equipment and training. Volunteer firemen do their best and deserve all the help we can give them. I think my people in Nunatsiaq would fully endorse this motion put forward by the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Caouette).

Mr. Knowles: Question!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question!

Motion (Mr. Caouette) agreed to.

Mr. Knowles: Six o'clock.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we might call it six o'clock.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.