

*Deductions for Volunteer Services*

once has to defend oneself and fight for a cause. I think this is also true of all charitable activities. We should rather consider other ways of encouraging volunteer work, as I said earlier. I therefore suggest, Madam Speaker, that we wait for the tabling of the review conducted by the Department of Finance on that question, and I am sure that the hon. member opposite will be given the opportunity to resume his attack with the support of his colleague and try to find original programs which will promote voluntary work in Canada.

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I should like to contribute a few short remarks to this debate. I want to suggest to the House that our society should increasingly resort to volunteer action. I do not feel, contrary to the previous speaker, that self-sacrifice, or volunteering to provide services to a community that needs them should be paid. I can give instances of this and this is what I meant.

First of all, when we consider what is being accomplished on a volunteer basis in many organizations, whether they are hospitals, schools or social institutions, we realize that, more and more, our society must face very difficult problems, although it is supposed to be rich and affluent. I am referring to volunteers working in hospitals.

Formerly there were women's clubs and auxiliaries, people who gave part of their time voluntarily. Nowadays, even if there are still in my constituency people who are very dedicated in such endeavours, we see that people are not as available as before because there is no money available.

The motion before us which proposes the refund of the cost seems to me to go against the principle of asking people to give part of their time. I also know that some people in my riding devote part of their time to go and visit patients at Christmas time, to look after sick children in institutions such as Eastern Ontario's Children's Hospital, to care for elderly or needy people.

All this problem will disappear because these people have no interest in participating in a kind of service, expecting a payment in return.

Madam Speaker, as one who has been involved in that type of occupation for years, I wish to say that if voluntary work is to be remunerated, it becomes usury. For me this is not in keeping with the traditional society we are familiar with, not the standards of a society which claims to be charitable and humanitarian.

I am thinking in particular of school commissioners, or of people who give away their leisure time, freely or for very little remuneration. And if we were to judge the worth of a physician, a barrister or an ordinary worker, we may have to think that their work is important while the retribution is not.

In my view this motion is not progressive: indeed it is rather a retrograde step, typically conservative. It would be unfortunate if the act were to be amended in such a way that those voluntary workers would receive a salary or their services would be assessed in terms of financial considerations.

[Mr. Loiselle (Chambly).]

I think that we should encourage people to give more of their time. And they have more time now as the 40 hour work week leaves many people with leisure time and more personal freedom. I think that the problem of society is rather to orient and encourage voluntarism, to encourage people to participate in the activity of their society rather than always think in terms of dollars and cents and retribution. We should increasingly encourage people to participate, to play an active part in society without trying to get something from it, money or some other form of retribution.

Madam Speaker, I only wished to say that voluntarism is important and that we should encourage people to participate as personal involvement is very important. As one hon. member said, I think that Local Initiative Programs particularly may have fashioned voluntarism and created in our society a class of people specialized in so-called social or voluntary organizations, but always looking forward to their \$100 or \$130 a week. I do not say it is bad but it does twist the reality of things. Finally those people depend on needy social groups. I think it is bad to encourage that kind of groups.

I shall conclude by saying that as politicians we should involve more and more Canadians in voluntary endeavours so that society can be valuable. This is why I hope the motion will be defeated.

[English]

● (1640)

**Mr. Rod Blaker (Lachine-Lakeshore):** Madam Speaker, I chose to speak on the topic this afternoon because upon first glance at the motion I found it particularly attractive to think that, as a result of some calculations I did in the House this afternoon, at \$3 an hour for every volunteer who worked to elect me in the last election, it would have cost the Government of Canada in tax revenues \$150,000 to put me in this House!

I am sure the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds) would not want to see that amount of money spent to have me or any other member elected. The hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta informs me that, under the terms of the Election Expenses Act, charitable donations or consideration of time for volunteers would not be applicable. I am well aware of that. I mention that only because I was somewhat interested in finding some way of compensating those volunteers who work for me at election time.

Other than that I speak on the motion because in my constituency there are in excess of 135 volunteer groups and organizations; everything from service clubs to Alcoholics Anonymous, groups assisting senior citizens, single parent family operations, tel-aid operations, and so on. There is a population of 100,000 in the three cities of Lachine, Dorval, and Pointe Claire.

I would assume that the departmental figures as to the cost of this motion are wrong. Revenue Canada is of the opinion it would cost approximately \$100 million to put such a motion into effect and thereby give the volunteers a credit for the amount of voluntary time they give. My own guess is that in one particular area of Canada alone, that is, the constituency I represent, it would cost \$100 million simply for the people in that area to volunteer their time