

*Supply*

that. They could not issue charitable receipts for those funds, and if they proceeded they were at risk of losing their registration for doing precisely what their objectives say they should do.

**Mr. McLean:** Ask the Mental Health Association.

**Mr. Bosley:** Ask the Mental Health Association of Canada whether it is clear if one is in violation of the law.

Just as a simple administrative matter, that same Civil Liberties Association for some reason did not file a return in 1978 or 1979. The computer system used by Revenue Canada has no capacity to notify a known charity of its failure to file a return and simply deems it to have disappeared. When this association raised its funds for the next year, it discovered that it had no right to issue receipts. These organizations do not know what their rights are.

Hon. Members opposite have tried to see this issue in terms of the good work that is done, but they have missed the issue as it is seen by the institutions. The issue facing organizations who are attempting to do something useful in this country today is that they have no way of knowing whether they are acting illegally or at risk of losing registration. They have no way of determining this because it is still a common law matter.

Since 1974, those institutions have sought a collective definition in the law to clarify their circumstances. Since 1974, the Government has been promising over and over again to do that. Here we are, on April 3, 1984, discussing a motion on the Order Paper asking the Minister to create a joint committee to look at the question of what charitable objects are and what the legal rights should be.

This is not a new issue. This same document from the National Voluntary Organizations, now in their tenth year, shows that in 1981 they submitted proposals to the Minister of Finance to resolve the issue. The key phrase in this document is, "That following three years of consultations the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations submitted a proposal to the Minister of Finance in December, 1981". How long will it take parliamentarians—I mean all of us—to recognize that we have a special obligation to clear these matters up quickly for people who are put into a position by our inactivity of potentially being illegal if they call us or write to us to tell us their problems. They do not have the same rights to lobby us or raise their own issues with us. They responded to consultations over three years by submitting a document in 1981. What did they get? They got three more years of non-action and another motion before the House, presumably well-intentioned. We all hope it produces action to resolve this question.

● (1750)

What have various Ministers said, Mr. Speaker? In 1981 the then Secretary of State at a conference entitled "Consultation '81" said:

I am committed to the development of a comprehensive federal government action policy developed jointly with the voluntary sector.

The Secretary of State (Mr. Joyal) at the Conference of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy in Toronto On November 10, 1982, said:

With this in mind, I intend to place this matter before Cabinet. My plan of action has five objectives . . .

1. To determine the legal and fiscal framework within which the Government and the voluntary sector can work together.

In 1983 and 1984, what do we have? We have a motion that takes precisely that line, to determine the legal and fiscal framework within which the Government and the voluntary sector can work together, and it strikes out half of them. The motion before the House leaves out the words "and fiscal". It would not be surprising to me if leaders of the National Voluntary Associations were a little skeptical about the purposes behind the motion tabled on the Order Paper. It says:

That a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons be appointed to examine and report upon the legal framework for voluntary actions with particular reference to the following:

There have been two issues facing the volunteer world: one, definition of status; and two, an attempt to get a better fiscal support mechanism for their activities. It is not as though Members of the House do not know this. Members of the House have heard the debate about give and take for at least four years. Members of the House know full well that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) took half of give and take. He kicked out the \$100 charitable donation deduction. He did not put back the proposal to allow charitable institutions and voluntary associations to get at the tax credit, which was the second leg of that proposal.

**Mr. McLean:** An \$80 million tax grab.

**Mr. Bosley:** The Minister of Finance could have tabled in the House at the time what he expected the tax expenditure saving to be, which is that wonderful technical phrase which means how much money he was going to get in extra—what he was going to get in extra. In fact, if you work it out in his documents, it is \$80 million. The Minister of Finance could have said that this issue of support for those who are trying to help others has been around long enough; I am taking the take part of give and take and I am going to give only \$80 million worth of the give proposal. But no, we get into more of the language, Mr. Speaker, that says let us have a Parliamentary committee some day. Let us look at the proposal somewhere else some day. In fairness, many of us expected that the new Secretary of State meant what he said 13 months ago and before that, that there would be a joint committee to look at these questions and try to resolve them.

It is frustrating to recognize that all Members of the House—and let us keep this as best we can non-partisan—who believe that the issue of the way people raise money is an important part of understanding the issue of the charitable institutions, and we are now going to have to lobby, I hope with the help of those on the other side who have raised the issue themselves. We still must persuade the Minister, it would appear, to include that issue in the joint committee study. It should not be surprising if many Members of this House