

*Canada Pension Plan*

Cubs. We may have worked as Big Brothers or Big Sisters or in the hospital milieu or helping the poor, sick, or elderly. We may have been involved in Meals on Wheels or pushing the gift cart through the hospital. We may have driven people who were incapacitated or incapable to doctors appointments. We may have actually cooked the meals that went into the hot packed meals delivered to doors. We may have been involved in friendly visiting or going to the veterans' hospital, which I can recall doing. We brought all kinds of services to society because we had an inner desire to fulfil our own personal need while, at the same time, helping someone else.

What that did for us is incredible. In many instances we learned how to develop a publicity program, how to design posters and leaflets and how to meet people. Our interpersonal skills were developed in this kind of setting. It was a challenge to meet people at their level and to meet people of different backgrounds, cultures, and persuasions and to get along with them. It is a great and important skill for people of all ages.

I would not like this to be a skill which is only usable by those who have disposable income. That is where the dilemma comes in. My friend has proposed that we consider a way, through the Canada Pension Plan, of being able to carry on when you are older. How can we acknowledge volunteers? We have volunteer week and volunteer buttons. We give plaques and cups and God knows how many different things to try to encourage and recognize voluntarism. I do not know if that is truly enough. I can only say that the Member has brought a most creative thought to mind which I do not want to turn down out of hand. I cannot say that I buy it a hundred and fifty per cent because I can see the inherent problems. However, maybe there is a way to get around it. I will never know unless I study the matter and pay attention to an important issue in our society, the role of the volunteer.

Is it contribution to this plan? Is it another form of protecting oneself and allowing oneself the capacity and ability to participate in our society? I really am not sure. However, I am sure that I do not want to turn the idea down cold without giving it a chance, without looking at—

[Translation]

—the pros and cons and seeing if there is not a possibility to earn pension credits for voluntary work. In this regard—

[English]

I would like to move an amendment to Motion M-103. I move:

That all the words after the word "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"the Standing Committee on National Health and Welfare be empowered to study the question of paying Canada Pension Plan benefits to persons not making contributions to the plan, and that such payment be in proportion to the time such persons dedicate to voluntary efforts in community social services."

I submit this amendment for your consideration, signed and sealed on this day. I would like to speak to it following its disposition.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bernier):** I want to say, with respect, to the Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) that I am taking her amendment under advisement and that she can continue her speech until 6:57 p.m.

**Mr. Malépart:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) on a point of order.

**Mr. Malépart:** Mr. Speaker, my point of order is the following: Would the Chair rule now on the amendment of my colleague from Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) instead of waiting to rule later? I think it would be better—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** As I said, the Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) will be allowed to continue her speech for a few minutes so that the Chair—and the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie will surely understand why—can consider the amendment. It is as simple as that.

The Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) has the floor for a few minutes.

[English]

**Mrs. Finestone:** Do I understand, Mr. Speaker, that you are now going to study the amendment and, subsequent to your decision, we will know whether we are to debate the amendment which I have just moved?

I feel very strongly that we must study voluntary effort because through the various budgetary reforms in the November statement, the May Budget and the February Budget, we have cut back in some significant areas of service. It is true that certain areas would need to be realigned. In other areas, however, as in the equalization payment fund, we are cutting in areas which are going to hurt our population. As a result of this we will need additional manpower and all the resources and encouragement possible to recruit people to fill the gap created by these Government decisions. In order to find such people, they themselves have to find mechanisms which would be enabling to them.

That is why I feel we should not shut the door on any new innovation. We should not close our minds. There may be something here which will be helpful. I do not know. I certainly do not have all the answers. I see that my amendment has brought the House to life. The whole world is coming in. They are all volunteers coming in to volunteer their time to discuss this Bill. That is wonderful.

This is beyond a joking matter. It is an important issue. Anyone who makes light of the role of the volunteer is insensitive to that particular function in our society which is key to the values that we hold as helpers of others in society.