

Supply

Mr. Joyal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) for his question because it goes to the core of the difficulty of defining charitable organizations under the present Income Tax Act. There is no doubt that if we are to give way to the objective of addressing this issue, one of the first priorities the task force will have to address will be essentially to look into the kind of balance that should be achieved between the advocacy initiatives and the other initiatives that pertain to the nature of the voluntary associations involved. That question is very difficult, as I referred to briefly in my remarks.

In Great Britain many studies have been made on that particular aspect in the last 30 years. To my knowledge, there have been four studies in Britain in the last 20 years. There has been exactly the same kind of concern in the United States, how to achieve a balance between the advocacy initiative and the whole concept or notion of charity.

As the Hon. Member knows, in the last years, we have seen the development of new kinds of voluntary associations which have as a primary purpose the advocacy of special lobby initiatives of government on general public opinion, advocacy for public interest as such. That has very little relationship with the old definition of charity. The definition of charities in Great Britain dates back to the 16th century. That is a primary focus for the special task force in order to help Parliament make a decision on the new phenomenon that we have confronted with Revenue Canada. There are presently some court actions because of some refusals due to the difficulty of addressing that phenomenon. That is why today's Order Paper bears a special notice of a motion to establish a task force to help us achieve that kind of balance.

I hope that the Hon. Member, who has experience in this area, will be a member of the task force so that significant recommendations can be made.

Mr. Roche: Mr. Speaker, I find it extraordinary that the Minister would announce in his speech that an extra \$200,000 will be devoted to voluntary organizations and tell us that this day, perhaps in a few minutes, he will make another speech outside the House in which he will state how that money is to be used and what the criteria are. I find it quite extraordinary that the Minister would not inform the House first of the criteria for the \$200,000 and the areas within the voluntary organizations that will receive it.

Mr. Joyal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I was reading some principles and criteria a moment ago when I was interrupted by one of the Hon. Member's colleagues. Therefore, I do not know where the Members opposite stand on that. Do they want the criteria or not? I do not want to play politics on that issue because it is an important issue. I know the Hon. Member's genuine concern for voluntary action in Canada as well as for many issues at the international level, for which I commend him. I made reference to that in my speech.

As I said briefly in my speech, the Government of Canada is concerned about the importance of the development of that

sector and the perception that Canadians should have of their own involvement in voluntary organizations.

As has been shown through reports and public statements of many groups, after a certain period of time one finds that it is always the same individuals who volunteer. There is a need to attract a great number of citizens to volunteer work. The essential purpose of the new money is to ensure that voluntary groups will have an opportunity to attract a larger membership and make a greater appeal for contributions. The areas of concern are those that meet with the priorities of our society, especially the social needs of Canadians. There is no doubt that we are going through a difficult economic time. Organizations which appeal particularly to social needs of Canadians will certainly be among the first ones to be considered. On the other hand, there are other organizations which try to foster better understanding among Canadians and a greater level of tolerance.

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In his own province, the Hon. Member has seen difficult situations arise in past months and years. We must address those issues and make Canadians more aware of the differences that exist among groups and regions in Canada to make sure that tolerance and respect for human rights is a Canadian objective. Those are a very few of the objectives which will be open to groups to follow according to their own genius, philosophy and objectives. However, we will try to do our utmost to bring to the attention of as many Canadians as possible the need for voluntary action, their roles as individuals in that movement and their capacity to build upon our society.

Mr. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for the information which he has tabled. I know that all of us who are concerned about the issue will find it helpful. However, I would like to echo the reservations of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Edmonton South (Mr. Roche). While there is no voluntary group in Canada which is not short of funds, I would like to suggest to the Minister that the fundamental request of voluntary leaders as I hear it is for fiscal independence. I would suggest to the Minister that despite the fact that the money will be welcome, it is a move in the wrong direction.

As I mentioned in my intervention to the Canadian Centre for philanthropy, the Minister in his speech spoke eloquently on the subject of the legal definition, of a charitable organization, one with which we agree, and also spoke about the question of fiscal incentives. I regret that because of his other responsibilities, we did not have a chance to discuss my question to the Minister in terms of the draft notice, but through the House Leaders it was suggested to him that not only the legal framework but the word "fiscal" should also appear in the preamble so that the tax incentive proposals can clearly appear on the agenda of the joint committee.

Second, I would like to suggest to the Minister that in an amendment to number three which I proposed through the House Leaders, the suggestion with regard to primary objects of advocacy was to make two classes of voluntary agencies in