

Voluntary Organizations

across the country which are closing down because they just do not have the funds to keep their doors open. And they are operated primarily by volunteers.

What I am trying to say is that I would be much more enthusiastic about this measure if, in the terms of reference of such a proposed organization, we knew that one of the functions would be to assist self-help groups and front line volunteer action groups find ways to obtain funds in order to keep their doors open and in order to pay a co-ordinator. Perhaps there would be enough funds for an occasional newsletter, which is very much needed.

I think we need to see a much clearer definition of what we mean by volunteering and volunteer organizations. The Hon. Member who introduced this motion talked about helping the elderly in homes and hospitals through sports and so on. That is an entire area of concern. We also have the traditional voluntary agency sector which my Liberal colleague mentioned. Primarily, these are agencies which are assisted by organizations such as the United Way and the National Voluntary Organizations. As I mentioned earlier, these types of organizations tend to see themselves as charitable organizations. However, they do have professional staff, although many use volunteers as well.

If we are to put in place such an organization as the one proposed then I think we should get away from the charity concept. To me, that is the concept of us doing something for someone who is not as good as us. It makes poor people feel as if they are second class citizens. We need community services; but we need so much for people in order to learn and to have a small amount of funding to do things for themselves on their own behalf and to help each other as equals. I would like to see more stress placed on this area.

When we talk about volunteerism we must be sure that we are clear on what should and should not be provided through volunteer services. When times are tough and when governments make restraint a main objective, there is a tendency to turn over services which are the responsibility of governments to volunteers. This has happened in British Columbia. These are legislated services which should be in place to provide welfare services or protection to battered children and which help with all types of serious social and health problems. These types of services cannot be replaced by volunteer organizations. There are certain services which are the responsibility of governments and which should remain in the public sector. We believe very strongly in this.

I would also like to point out that when we talk about volunteers we should not talk about volunteers who will replace people in union jobs or jobs which should be union jobs. We should not use volunteers to undermine those in paid jobs. I am thinking of municipal services in particular.

Professionals are needed in certain roles. In this respect I refer to private agencies in the social services field. Sometimes I think we use too many professionals. I think there is a real place for para-professionals and for volunteers but perhaps professionals should be used in a more consultative and training role. They should certainly be used in serious situations for

counselling and so on. We also need skilled professionals in the direct service area.

Since my time has almost expired I would like to mention that we are concerned about the lack of consultation which has taken place. For that reason we really do not feel that we can support this motion at this time. That does not mean that we are opposed to the principles presented. However, in preparation for this debate my office phoned around as much as time allowed to quite a number of organizations across the country. Someone in my office called the United Way office in the Lower Mainland and spoke to someone who felt this was a good idea but who also wanted to know more about it. There has been no consultation. The United Way of Canada expressed some real concerns about this proposal. One of the concerns was who would select the board of directors and how representative and independent the organization would be. A number of people we consulted felt that the organization should not fall under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State. They felt that if there were an organization it should be independent of government. Of course, there was reference to the *People in Action* Report, a report from the 1970s, which should be studied. We feel that the submissions put forward by the National Voluntary Organizations should be considered. I would like to refer to the pre-budget submission of that organization to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) which contains some excellent suggestions. In fact, one thing which is stressed is that the economic contribution of the voluntary sector is to create jobs. Some 200,000 Canadians are employed by Canadian charities. That is sort of the other side of the coin.

I know that my time has expired, Mr. Speaker. In closing, I suggest that there should be more consultation with all these organizations, including self-help neighbourhood community development groups.

• (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 46 deemed to have been moved.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT—LEGISLATION'S PHILOSOPHY

Mr. Jim Jepson (London East): Mr. Speaker, in December I rose in the House with a question for the Solicitor General, the Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty), on the subject of the Young Offenders Act. There has been an ample supply of groups and individuals, including Parliamentarians, police force representatives, judges and social agencies, who have criticized the weaknesses of the legislation passed by the previous Government in addressing the needs of young people. But the legislation has also been praised for its