

Volunteer Firemen

mine. It really does make a difference if you add up the costs. What about the southern part of my constituency? There we find places such as Glenalla, Ochre River, Plumas, or I could mention my home town of Pine River where I was brought up. Then there is Rorkton and Meadow Portage. I could go on endlessly listing some other places where there are fire chiefs. I have mentioned only the towns that have volunteer firemen, but there are other people associated with them as well. I think it is important we recognize that. The ordinary person does not participate in these types of duties.

If one looks at the record of some of these fire-fighters one finds that they have been involved for a long period of time. If you are involved in any kind of social work, Mr. Speaker, you would know that individuals experience burn-out. When one is involved in social work dealing with people problems for a period of two, three, or four years, it is possible to burn out. Just consider the types of stress and frustration some of these individuals go through. Consider the amount of time they devote to this service.

I have just examined records of the fire chiefs in Dauphin and I find the situation amazing. Just let me cite the record of the previous fire chief, David Seeley. He retired this year. He retired after being fire chief for 28 years. Here is a man who has served almost a whole generation by offering fire protection to his neighbourhood. He served as fire chief for the last eight of the 28 years. People in urban centres have fire-fighting equipment. Perhaps some people wonder if there really is a necessity for this type of fire protection in rural areas. If you look at the number of calls firemen in Dauphin have to make in the course of a year, you will find that an average of 60 fires a year occur, many of them in rural areas. Firefighters have to go a fair distance from where the fire truck is located.

More and more people are recognizing the value of this kind of volunteer activity. The number of people participating in this kind of force is growing. In small communities such as mine where there may have been 18 firefighters several years ago, now there are 30. This is a great help.

I just wanted to bring some of these matters to the attention of the House. This measure is very important and it should be passed on. The Hon. Member ought to be commended for raising the matter. I hope the motion is referred to the committee. Fortunately, the Hon. Member for Mississauga North is not in the House so he will not talk it out.

Let me come back to the allowance. The exemption should be made for all types of volunteer firemen even if they are paid only a small pittance. Revenue Canada is sure to collect it anyway. There is no problem there. But the amount of expense firefighters have in the pursuit of protecting citizens at large is great. The savings given by the firefighters to their areas are substantial.

In conclusion, let me illustrate. I will take my home town of Dauphin which has a small population of 10,000. In 1983, for the 30 volunteer firemen who are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the total amount of allowance given was \$46,000. If you were to translate that amount into paying firefighters a salary for an entire year, you might be able to pay two

firefighters on a full-time basis working a 40 hour week. This indicates the fantastic economic saving that occurs from having these firemen in your community. Other community organizations are involved. There are the Kinsmen groups who contribute by way of having all types of equipment donated to the fire-fighting association. Other groups might get different kinds of equipment such as that which cuts through metal. There are special kinds of shears to cut through automobiles. Then another implement is the jaws of life. I know that one organization in Dauphin has purchased one of these for our fire department. All these contributions by other associations contribute to the entire effort.

It is for these reasons that I feel we should support this measure. I trust government Members will not talk out this motion as they did the last time. I hope this matter goes to committee, which will make sure that the volunteer firemen in our communities receive not only recognition but the assistance they need to carry out this very important activity.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this Private Member's motion proposed by the Hon. Member for Southwest Nova (Miss Campbell). I shall be very brief.

We should have respect for this institution. More important, there should be respect for the Members who, after all, in the final analysis, make the rules. Private Members' hour should have meaning, especially on motions that have the support of all three Parties. This motion is supported by all three Parties of this House. It is a motion, as I know from my research, which is not objected to by the Department of Finance. It would cause no problem in the central agencies. It would do an enormously good turn in providing a small measure of recognition for the tremendous job of voluntary service to the community carried out by volunteer fire departments all across Canada.

● (1730)

Some people think this is a motion, Mr. Speaker, which is only going to assist a few fire departments here and there in Canada. In my own riding, a district encompassing some 90,000 people, with 350 miles to 400 miles of coast line, with several hundred small communities, there are only three municipalities big enough or financed well enough to have paid fire departments. All the rest of the communities, Mr. Speaker, depend for their very life and limb upon the good citizenship, the spirit of voluntarism and the compassion of those men who have agreed to serve in voluntary departments.

I can think of Stephenville Crossing, Cormack, Cow Head, Deer Lake, Pasadena, Massey Drive, Gillams, Parson's Pond, St. Pauls, Rocky Harbour, Port au Choix, Irishtown, Mount Moriah, only to name a few, Mr. Speaker. All of the citizens of those communities can go to bed at night and rest easy knowing their children are safe because there is a dedicated group of people who ask for no pay, no thanks and no revenues. They merely want to serve their communities. All this motion asks, Mr. Speaker, is that the volunteer firemen in those small communities, who have built their fire department