

Deductions for Volunteer Services

block? Is he any less charitable than the person who gives a service—let alone money—to a recognized charity? What happens to him if his kind of charity is not recognized in terms of a motion such as this? I suggest that we will be creating a disincentive for those kinds of people to undertake such charitable good works.

Aside from the feeling a man can get, or his own personal rewards, I suggest there would be a disincentive because everyone will be encouraged only to give services or money to those charities which are recognized by the Department of National Revenue. That will create a disincentive for good will in the broader sense in this country. As a result there would be no return for the donor. I think this will destroy individual character and individual incentive because a person can only receive a refund if donations are given to a government recognized charity.

In summary the point I wish to make is that we all know how very difficult, if not impossible, it is to attempt to legislate morality. Legislators have known that since time immemorial. If we cannot legislate morality, how do we begin to attempt to legislate good will amongst mankind?

We have various holidays every year. We are approaching Christmas, the celebration of one who almost 2,000 years ago gave His life trying to promote feelings of good will among people. How well has He succeeded? How well will we succeed in an attempt like this, or will we really wind up defeating ourselves in the long run?

● (1620)

Miss Coline Campbell (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to speak this afternoon on the motion of the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds).

I am sure the House is well aware of the responsibilities of the Department of the Secretary of State in strengthening the voluntary sector of society. The department does this through the provision of financial and technical resources. Across Canada there are 25 field offices from which the department's social development officers maintain contact on a regular basis with a wide variety of voluntary and community organizations. Sometimes these officers assist organizations by providing them with information about governmental and other programs. Sometimes it is necessary to assist a group with a grant.

The citizenship sector has several programs designed to assist citizens' groups which are working to promote government policies such as multicultural citizen participation, the status of women, human rights and group understanding, native citizens development, and the improvement of the position of francophone communities across the country. The emphasis in all these programs is on encouraging Canadians to take a more active part in community affairs. The activity and financial support of the department's field staff help to improve the quality of Canadian citizenship.

The Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) has spoken on numerous occasions in the last three years on the importance of the voluntary sector and on the significant role that volunteers play in Canadian life. Among other government programs the student community service program, Madam Speaker, was introduced in the summer of

[Mr. Young.]

1974, and one of its most important objectives was to encourage more young people to take part as volunteers in all kinds of voluntary organizations. This program has been very successful both from a standpoint of the student participants and the volunteer organizations and we are encouraged that it is making a contribution to the strength of the voluntary sector.

It should be recognized, however, that the voluntary sector faces many problems. They often find it hard to raise funds. Some are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers. Others find it a great problem to communicate with their members across the country. There is concern for a bilingual capacity among national organizations, and so on.

It was in consideration of these problems and others that the Secretary of State established the National Advisory Council on Voluntary Action a year ago. This council, composed of 15 individuals all with an active background in the voluntary sector, and chaired by Miss Raynelle Andreychuck, an able woman lawyer from Saskatchewan, has been given the mandate of studying the problems in the voluntary sector and making recommendations to the Secretary of State for ways in which the federal government can improve the situation. Hopefully this council will make some important recommendations to enable the federal government to improve the effectiveness of its support to voluntary services.

The Secretary of State has mentioned on several occasions in his speeches the possibility of changing the income tax legislation to give encouragement to volunteer activity. Most recently he mentioned this subject at the annual meeting of the Big Brothers Association of Ottawa and District in April, 1975. This is also a subject about which the Advisory Council on Voluntary Action is concerned. I am confident the council will be considering the kind of proposal made by the hon. member. It is likely in fact that a discussion or working paper on the subject of the tax system and voluntary action would be available by the council within the next year.

A most important recent study by the Canadian Council on Social Development, "Volunteers: The Untapped Potential", has provided a wealth of information about the motives, activities, and problems of volunteers across Canada. The aim of the study as stated in the book is "to test the hypothesis that there are large numbers of people in Canada who are potential volunteers; to explore the characteristics of volunteers and those who are not volunteers; and to inquire in a preliminary way into present administration and organizational practices related to volunteer activity."

One of the points this study makes is that volunteering is no longer the preserve of the upper middle class woman, and that more and more Canadians of different socio-economic backgrounds are getting involved in volunteer work. I should like to record some of the people and ideas which are attached to volunteers in this report—slightly more than half of Canada's people are involved in some type of volunteer work or charitable giving—more men are volunteers than has been believed, some 44.5 per cent—people of all ages are involved, with substantial representation of people under 25 years as well as people over 60—the percentage of volunteers reporting family income of less than