

or research work, the important thing is not just the financial aspect, but also the structures which can be provided by certain Departments.

I believe that all these aspects should be examined. Often, when people speak about non-profit or charitable organizations, they are only concerned with donations. I think that it could be appropriate to reflect on what the various Departments provide year after year either in terms of money or of human resources.

Often, Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of human resources. And there are needs in this area. Departments could make available part of their human resources to these non-profit and voluntary organizations, thereby avoiding useless expenditures. These organizations could then better reach their goals. There are a great many opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and the best way to find them is to communicate with the people themselves. Then, through a debate free of partisan considerations aimed at helping quickly the registered organizations, we could find a short term solution which would meet the needs of everybody.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, it would be important for the Secretary of State to hurry with this matter for Hon. Members from both sides of the House are receiving an increasing number of letters and petitions from organizations which are seeking not only recognition but a voice. I suggest it would be a great opportunity for us to invite to come forward all those who would like to be heard and appear before a joint committee which would patiently listen to their ideas, for Hon. Members from both sides of the House have solutions to propose, Mr. Speaker. I think that both the government and the opposition have solutions to propose, except that they must be discussed before being implemented. I also think that the points raised by the government as well as the Official Opposition are basically very interesting, but they need to be improved upon if we want them really to meet the needs of voluntary organizations.

Coming back to the motion, Mr. Speaker, I think that blaming the government at this stage might not be the best policy. Personally, I would rewrite the motion and urge the government to appoint immediately a joint committee to hear the views of the various groups for the purpose of meeting their respective needs. As my time is about to expire, I should like to say that I do not support the motion as moved by the Hon. Member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean), although I recognize the necessity of meeting the various interested groups and find a formula which would satisfy everybody.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! Questions or comments? Debate. The Chair recognizes the Hon. Member for Calgary West.

[English]

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by complimenting the Hon. Member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean) for moving the motion. I would point out to the

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House and Canadians generally that this is the first day of debate on the national voluntary sector in the life of this Parliament, which is approximately four years and six weeks old. That is a curious commentary on the priorities of the Government as they relate to what I think is a very important sector.

In straight economic terms, the voluntary sector, excluding hospitals and educational institutions, accounts for approximately 2 per cent of our Gross National Product. That is just its economic contribution to Canadian society. Its contributions in terms of the inculcation of values which I am sure most people in this Chamber would value is incalculable. It is the national voluntary sector that gives us much of what we enjoy in terms of quality of life in this country.

I think it is a sad statement that the Government has allowed four years and six weeks to pass without bringing forward anything of substance for us to debate in this Chamber relative to this sector. I am disappointed that members of the Liberal Party stand up one after the other to indicate that they are not really willing to support this motion.

I believe this motion is a condemnation of the Cabinet and, as members accountable to their constituents, I think we should condemn the Cabinet from time to time. The Cabinet does not always do a good job; we on this side of the House believe they seldom do a good job. Certainly in relation to the voluntary sector I think it is clear they have not done a good job.

● (1630)

I was particularly struck by some of the questions posed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Evans) who was at one point Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. What he said in this Chamber today, Mr. Speaker, is that any large corporation, IBM, Imperial Oil, or whatever, is free to lobby, to come to Government and propose changes. When you look at the tax system you find lobbyists from any major corporation lobbying Members of Parliament using 50 cent dollars. The corporate tax rate on profits is 50 per cent. When those lobbyists come to lobby MPs from Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal Canadian taxpayers pay 50 per cent of their salary, travel and sustenance costs.

Members opposite, in particular the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council, told us today that, first they do not agree that people should be able to donate to charities with 50-cent dollars and, second, if a group wants to retain its status as a charity and get any relief out of the tax system, then beware. In other words if you are a voluntary organization you do not have the same rights as Imperial Oil, IBM or a thousand and one other companies. You do not have the right to suggest changes in legislation to Members of Parliament, nor do you have the right to suggest improvements in the quality of life. That is an astonishing statement.

Before the Parliamentary Secretary spoke, the Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher) told us that grants were better than tax relief. Sitting in the front row is