

S. O. 31

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I simply wanted to add my sense of great regret at the death of Howard Green and words of appreciation for his distinguished career, a career particularly worthy of commendation for two reasons that recommend themselves to the House of Commons.

He was a pre-eminent parliamentarian, a man who understood the House of Commons, had a deep faith and commitment to it, and always conducted himself in accordance with the highest standards of this place.

On the international stage, the late Howard Green served this country with both conscience and effectiveness. He demonstrated that a country like Canada can make a difference in international affairs, and make a difference on those issues of conscience and principle which are important to all of our country.

He is very much a part of our tradition, and all of us mourn the loss of this extraordinary western Canadian and Canadian.

Mr. Speaker: I would also ask the indulgence of the House to allow the Speaker, who cannot speak, to say something on this matter.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: I grew up in Vancouver Quadra. Howard Green was always our Member of Parliament. My father—this may come as a great shock to some of you—was a Liberal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: But, this will not come as a surprise to you, he always voted for Howard Green.

I once asked my mother: "Isn't father a Liberal?" She said: "Yes". I asked: "Why does he vote for Howard Green who is a Conservative?" She said: "Your father and Howard Green enlisted together from British Columbia and went to France and fought together in the trenches, and that is all there is to that".

• (1420)

It was, I think, an expression of the kind of faith that people had in Howard Green. It came from a lot of different places, a lot of humble places. He has left us now. However, I think it is appropriate to say that he

would be listening with a quiet and perhaps bemused smile to what we are saying.

The Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) said that he loved this place. He did; but he loved his country more. He loved the people whom he served.

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VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS

LIMIT OF TAX EXEMPTION

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, there is no question in anyone's mind with respect to the splendid work done by volunteer fire-fighters, not only in my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk but all across Canada.

Volunteer fire-fighters served their municipalities with very little compensation. Generally, they are given honorariums to cover out-of-pocket expenses. I am confident that no one in this House would disagree with such remuneration. One would agree that their service is worthy of every penny.

The Government presently allows them a \$500 tax exemption on honorariums that they receive. However, the inflationary costs incurred in the course of duty expenses often exceed the \$500 tax exemption limit and volunteers are now being forced to pay income tax on these expenses.

These volunteers are donating their time and often risking their lives on behalf of others. Surely, we owe them more thanks than this.

Tax exemptions for volunteer fire-fighters in Canada should be increased to at least \$1,000. This sum should be increased periodically to keep up with added costs and inflation.

This is the least Canada can do to recognize the great contribution these volunteers make to our country and offer some incentive for the civic minded individuals to continue this service to their communities and to Canada.

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TRANSPORTATION

REQUEST FOR NATIONAL STRATEGY

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, within a few days we are expecting the business plan for VIA Rail as requested by the Government of Canada. I urge the Government of Canada, in considering its response to