

starting to do it. I give you as examples Sweden, Norway, New Zealand, and even Brazil is making some attempt at reforestation. Right now in Canada we are buying our telephone poles from Finland and railway ties from Malaysia, things that we supplied ourselves for many, many years.

Of the 800,000 hectares of timber harvested each year in Canada, only 25 per cent are replanted artificially. Granted, about another 37 per cent will be naturally replaced, but it still means we are losing 400,000 to 500,000 hectares of forest each year. So it is very necessary that this Government, indeed all Governments in Canada, look at the forest industry as a priority and establish a policy which will allow us to regenerate and continue to be one of the major industries of this country.

● (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

NATIONAL REVENUE—DESIGNATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL BOARD AS CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, in the better than nine years I have been here an issue has arisen periodically in the House during Question Period regarding the policy of Revenue Canada as it affects charitable organizations and non-profit organizations. Usually it centres around the issue of lobbying because, as you will understand, Mr. Speaker, non-profit organizations are very interested in the interpretation bulletins. I am not speaking simply of the law now. I am speaking of interpretation bulletins which are sent out by the tax department and which guide tax officials in applying the law to organizations across Canada. The issue usually centres around the interpretation bulletin which focuses upon what the tax department considers as lobbying.

I feel we should understand, Mr. Speaker, that any organization in Canada, a non-profit organization or a charitable organization, is interested in how the law is drafted and how it is going to affect that organization, so that when it comes to speak to Members of Parliament, Members of Cabinet and to the Government, it naturally is engaged in some form of lobbying. It seems to me that it is just pure logic that an organization, as a Canadian corporate entity in Canada, ought to be entitled, under the freedoms which we enjoy, to lobby the Government regarding the application of laws and how those laws would affect those organizations. Nevertheless, the Government has always been very twitchy about the activities of some organizations and the lobbying in which they might engage.

Adjournment Debate

I will be the first to admit, Mr. Speaker, that there are some organizations which I suspect sometimes exceed the bounds of propriety, and I speak particularly of some church organizations. I wonder if some of the preachers are not frustrated politicians rather than preachers of the Gospel. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, it is wrong, I feel, on the part of the Government to put in jeopardy the entire organization because some of its members might exceed the bounds of propriety in the way they lobby.

In that spirit, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean) several weeks ago raised a question of an organization in Canada, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the fact that it felt jeopardized by members of Revenue Canada in that its charitable status was going to be called into question. When the Hon. Member asked that question, I called back to my memory something I had read in the *Vancouver Province* under a headline, "The taxman giveth". It came to my memory, Mr. Speaker, that during the past year, good old National Revenue gave charitable tax status to a school board in Kelowna, British Columbia. I hope my good friend, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Bloomfield) is not going to get up in his place and say that that is a piece of misinformation, because I want to inform him that it is not. The tax number for that school board is 0646737-20-26.

We now have the strange situation of a school board having charitable status in central Okanagan, and that raises some very profound questions as to the effect that that is going to have on the taxpayers across Canada. For example, if that school board derives its authority from a municipality, might the municipality not be able to issue tax receipts for the purpose of charitable donations? The school board received its charitable status under the category of advancement of education, which we can understand. I think all of us accept the fact that trustees of that school board campaigned very vigorously, politically for that position. As a matter of fact, the New Democratic Party in its conventions for the last number of years has urged its members to get elected to local offices under a Party ticket. It would be pretty hard, therefore, to suggest that a school board is a non-political organization since it is engaged almost exclusively in lobbying.

● (1805)

How can the Minister give a number to a school board as a charitable organization, a school board which conducts much of its activity in lobbying! We might ask ourselves whether those taxes that we pay, our property taxes, allocated to schools and education, would now be a tax deductible item on our income tax. That would be a very interesting innovation, Mr. Speaker, which I frankly would like to see happen if the Government is going to do this. Mr. Speaker, it opens a wide area of dispute if the Government is going to do this. Sooner or later the Government will have to decide this issue of what constitutes lobbying.

I would like to have my friend tell me tonight what the Government defines as lobbying. Are charitable organizations