

The Budget—Miss Bégin

actual measure which existed in the budget. We will do it, I suppose, at a future time, but that could not be entertained right now for obvious reasons. However, the most urgent matter is to help the voluntary associations to get more funds from the public. They do not receive real funds when people hide behind the automatic \$100 deduction without receipt. Now people will have a receipt.

There is one more thing which we need to correct in the future, and that is, to switch from the concept of an exemption to the concept of a tax credit. I acknowledge that. But to raise such a credit to 50 per cent of the donation is extremely expensive. We have not reached that level yet in the country from public funds. It is impossible this year, for obvious reasons, to consider that. We have taken the first step, however, and we have put the only resources available on job creation.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, surely the Minister knows that the voluntary organizations do provide services and do things for the Canadian people which, if they did not, would have to be done by Governments and would cost a great deal more money than they do at the present time. In the *Winnipeg Free Press* on Tuesday there was a front page story quoting Captain John Moore, the Director of the Salvation Army's Suicide and Crisis Intervention Bureau as saying that because of the fact that we have 1,658,000 unemployed and because Government programs are not making provision for more jobs, there are going to be more suicides. The Salvation Army's Suicide and Crisis Intervention Bureau is just one of many organization which operates to a large extent from the voluntary contributions of Canadian citizens. If they were not there, the federal and provincial Governments would have to provide the services. Surely the Minister knows, and anyone who has been involved in trying to raise money for voluntary organizations knows, that one of the best ways of getting people to contribute is to be able to assure them that they are going to get a refund, they are going to get a credit toward the payment of their income tax. Surely the request of the voluntary organizations made repeatedly since 1977 makes so much sense that even this Government should have paid attention. When they accepted the least important suggestion of the two made by the voluntary organizations, surely they could have gone the whole hog and adopted both suggestions.

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, I would say no, we could not go the complete way. The Hon. Member has also made a mistake in the way he put his case across, and I would like to refer him to the Fiscal Plan, page 27, for the detailed figures. The truth is that in the past, dozens of millions of dollars were lost to the voluntary organizations by Canadian taxpayers who never donated a penny and got away with \$100 deductions. Well, that is wrong. That is dozens of millions of dollars that did not go to voluntary organizations. We have not abolished the tax deduction; you are making a mistake on that. There is a tax deduction but with receipts. So that is an excellent step in the right direction. The next step, which is to give a bigger refund

via a tax credit, will be for the future when the country is able to afford it.

● (1630)

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister with regard to the reassessment of the social welfare program in New Brunswick where the new provincial Minister is hiring some 35 new inspectors to make sure that there is no cheating in the system. I do not think anyone can argue that there should not be cheating, but I point out that that devious Government was very careful not to talk about that during the recent election campaign. Has the Minister satisfied herself that that inquiry, or inquisition, is being carried out fairly and properly with regard to welfare recipients in New Brunswick?

Miss Bégin: To my knowledge no complaints have been received in my office. Of course, each time we see provincial initiatives like that which may threaten the rights of social service clients, or welfare payments, we make sure the basic rules of the game are respected. Knowing that tough times would make Governments take tough measures, I sent, particularly through the Family Allowance cheques, last August or September a little pamphlet explaining to people who need welfare and are refused welfare the appeal mechanism in each of the Provinces and the way they can make sure their rights are respected.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer of the Minister but I point out to her that the election campaign in New Brunswick did not start before August or September. While the Leader of the Liberal Party publicly stated that he would take a careful look at the welfare system to make sure there were no cheaters, the present Government heaped scorn on him for suggesting such a thing, but after the election it immediately implemented the program he had suggested. Therefore, I would ask if the Minister would make sure she monitors the situation on a continuing basis because it is not possible to trust the motives of that Government.

Miss Bégin: We always do. We always do monitor that, and we are very sensitive to tough times in order that no accident takes place anywhere.

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great attention to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin). I was glad to hear her finally say that she was conscious of the plight of the unemployed in this country. As she enunciated her social responsibility in defining them, she made one serious omission; she forgot to mention her responsibility with respect to the unprecedented unemployment situation we have in this country today. It was alluded to during the course of the question and answer period by virtue of the point being made that the scope and length of the unemployment problem was putting undue stress on the voluntary sector, the voluntary organizations in this country. I could go on to tell her that not only is it doing that—all you have to do is read about the soup kitchens and