

*Supply*

level or another all my life, that was where I really came to terms with how that worked, why people were willing to do that through a church or another organization. It is a natural way to respond to the demand to love other people. I could talk of hundreds of thousands of people who are able to do that. Today we are trying to improve what is already in place. As I said, I think from what I have heard in the House today that that is going to happen. It may not be tomorrow or next week, but it is going to happen because the goodwill is present in this House today.

Some things are going to have to be discussed which are not easy. One question is, when does an activity become political? When does this or that particular group become political? It is not an easy question to answer. Some people will consider an action to be political, while someone else will consider it to be very charitable. They can see that the only possible response to a particular thing at a particular time has to be this activity. But two people see it two different ways.

Last Sunday, in a church in which I had never been before, following Mass I went around to a little alcove in which the local community had set up a development project. It was something to do with Lent, showing how this particular parish had responsibility to people in other parts of the world. There was a picture there of a good friend of mine, Dom Helder Camara, the Archbishop for Recife in Brazil. He retired from office in the last few weeks because he is 75 years old. He has visited Canada many times, and many people in this House, as well as those watching on television, have publicly heard him speak. Under the picture of Dom Helder Camara was written: "When I give food to the hungry, people call me a Saint; but when I ask why the poor do not have food, they call me a communist." Through that little expression we come to the question which will be difficult for that task force to answer. Where does religion stop and politics start, or politics stop and religion start? That is going to be difficult.

Dom Helder Camara has worked with many of the volunteer organizations I have worked with in international development. The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development of Peace, for instance, is a volunteer organization that uses the donations of Canadians to help development projects around the world. Dom Helder Camara has frequently come to Canada to speak to that group. I know from my own experience in working with him that much of the funding given by Canadian people has gone to work in his section of northeast Brazil where there is massive poverty, hunger, health problems and so on. I believe that the person who gives what he can to any organization is loving his neighbour. That is one of the ways in which Canadian people, who live in a rich part of the world, can help those less privileged in other parts of the world.

● (1730)

I believe that the income tax law should be changed so that when a person gives a donation to a particular organization which they believe is loving their neighbour they should in turn receive a something themselves; that is, they will get a tax

break. This will make it possible for them to extend their own personal income to help someone else.

I think there is strong motivation in what has been proposed by my colleague from Waterloo which will benefit the volunteer sector of our country and will not be a burden imposed on the taxpayers. This type of activity will make funds more readily available. Grants from the Government will not be necessary. The people themselves will take greater responsibility in the local, national and international areas. The responsibilities which are part and parcel of being a human being will be more easily addressed because people will have more say in how their charity is being used in the world.

The National Volunteer Organizations are meeting here today. It is a very good day to have this debate. It is fitting that it should be today. There must be a lot of clarification of words. In the volunteer sector definitions of many things are not clear. There is a lot of vagueness with regard to religion and politics. The information which has been supplied by the National Volunteer Organizations to members and anyone who is interested indicates that a charitable organization has to be defined by the tradition of the common law. A charitable organization can be one of four things. It can be for the relief of poverty, for the advancement of religion, for the advancement of education or for other purposes beneficial to the community. That gives us an idea of what charitable organizations are. In whatever new legislation is proposed there must be clear a understanding of what those particular areas are. When the common law was being established I am sure that the word community referred to a very small group. Today most people have a much bigger vision of what community is. It refers not only to down the road, but to the whole global village.

Another reason I think the debate today is so important is that I suspect what we are talking about today in the House of Commons will touch more people than any other single Bill or motion to which I have spoken. Probably every Canadian is involved in one or more of these voluntary groups. It could be in sports, music, health, with the Red Cross, with the local YMCA or with any one of the church groups I am talking about. Many people are involved with many of these organizations. What we are talking about today is important because it is going to touch every single Canadian directly one way or another. Something will happen so that that person will be affected. Something will happen that will make that person more able to act the way I was speaking about a little earlier; the whole way of how to love your neighbour. We are discussing something today which is of intense interest to every Canadian.

I see that my time is up. I am happy to have had these minutes to propose a few ideas about how I hope the task force will begin its work. I hope it will have direction in its work which will reflect some of the things we have talked about today. I will close by saying that I feel we have had a good and profitable debate, and I am very happy to have been part of it.