

Income Tax Act

I want to congratulate the Hon. Member for St. Boniface. I believe this particular motion is long overdue because it identifies a critical component of Canadian society—the sporting and athletic component—which provides our young people with an outlet for their energies and creative talents through participating in competitive or non-competitive sports. Competitive and non-competitive sports could include amateur hockey or baseball as opposed to gymnastics.

This motion provides parliamentarians with an opportunity to assist this vital sector of our society. As the representative of the New Democratic Party, I look forward to our discussions in committee as we find a way of enacting this motion into legislative form. I guarantee that the NDP will support this motion at every stage of its evolution.

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin-Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I also take pleasure in rising in the House today to lend my support to Motion No. 174, moved by my friend and colleague from Manitoba, the Hon. Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Duguay).

The purpose of this motion is to enable provincial sports organizations to raise funds for purposes of developing national and international calibre athletes within the province. This could be done in a manner which is consistent with that which is already acceptable under the terms of the Income Tax Act with respect to federal amateur athletic organizations.

As my friend from St. Boniface has mentioned, the portion of the Act in question is Section 110(1)(a) dealing with charitable donations.

At present, sports activities are not deemed to be charitable in nature and thus, a non-profit sports organization cannot register as a Canadian charitable organization for income tax purposes. Any qualifying organization, in accordance with the Act, must have, as its primary purpose and function, the promotion of amateur athletics on a nation-wide basis. According to paragraph (a), an organization which purports to operate for the improvement and development of sport must qualify as a Canadian amateur athletic association in order to be eligible for registration and therefore to be able to issue tax receipts to donors.

A Canadian amateur athletic association by definition includes federal associations but does not include their provincial counterparts.

If the legislation could be amended, as it would be following the recommendation under Motion 174, it would make it such that provincial associations would be eligible to issue tax receipts for donations received. I think everyone would agree that if such provincial amateur sports organizations could issue tax receipts, then funding for them would increase substantially. In other words, even though the amendments recommended today are quite simple and straightforward, the impact on provincial and local sports associations would be tremendously positive.

Amateur sport at the local level has played a very large role in my life as it has in the life of my colleague from St. Boniface. My involvement as a participant as well as the many

years that I have spent coaching at various levels have shown me how important sports activities and associations are to young athletes, particularly activities and associations at the provincial and the local level.

The very existence of Section 110(1)(a) of the Income Tax Act shows that the lawmakers of Canada also believe in the development of amateur sport and in its importance to our country's people.

We must begin building a solid base in this country for sport, one that is accessible to all Canadians, not just a select few. In order for an amateur athlete to benefit from the present legislation—and the benefits are quite real—he or she must reside in a major populated area of our country. In other words, a dedicated, talented amateur athlete from my riding of Dauphin-Swan River in west central Manitoba is at a disadvantage right from the start. He or she does not have access to the funding and thus does not have access to the facilities and training that this money can buy. There are athletes who succeed in overcoming the barriers, but they have to be enormously gifted young people. Still, the question remains: How many others, given the opportunity, could have enriched their lives through amateur sport?

I am speaking about a very fundamental principle of Canadian life. I want my children and my neighbour's children to have and to enjoy the same opportunities as does another person who happens to come from a certain part of the country that is more heavily populated. I believe that the development of our young athletes can be quite successful at the provincial and local level as well as at the national level.

The creation of a sound provincial and local sports structure encourages all Canadians to participate and to compete. This infrastructure will not only provide an opportunity for all amateur athletes to partake in healthy sporting activities but will also create a sports pool of athletes from which our future sports stars will rise. This is our Government's interpretation of what a sports pool should be. It is not a gambling sports pool lottery but the creation of a pool of athletes.

The people of Canada must work together at the community level to develop amateur sports. It must be a community resource. It must become a community adventure. The amateur sports enthusiasts want a strong structural base for sports for all the people of Canada.

At present, funds are being spent to develop a select few athletes in the hope that they will become international sports stars. I am holding the 1983-84 annual report of Fitness and Amateur Sport of Canada. Let me illustrate some examples by reading from the summary of contributions in the annual report. In that year, for instance, the Canadian Amateur Basketball Association received over \$880,000; the Canadian Amateur Diving Association received just under \$400,000; the Canadian Amateur Football Association received close to \$225,000; the Canadian Amateur Rowing Association received \$653,000; the Canadian Amateur Speedskating Association received \$575,000; the Canadian Amateur Swimming Association received over \$1,100,000; the Canadian Association of Sports Sciences received \$115,000; the Canadian Council for