

donations to such organizations are concerned. Why? That is a question we must answer. Should there be better control over the funds or the accounting of these organizations? Should we review their operation, either through a government agency or otherwise? These are all questions which should be answered.

We will also have to consider carefully the various categories of organizations. There are, of course, the national and the provincial organizations, but it will be important to evaluate the role and credibility of local and community organizations which certainly have the best public penetration. We will have to visit the small communities since they often find it impossible to be heard in Ottawa as they cannot afford to come here to make presentations. In this same area, we shall have to show creativity in recommending means to enable all voluntary associations, whatever they are and whatever the number of their members and their budget, to have equal access to grants and other means of support offered by the Canadian government.

The complexity of regulations concerning the various government programs is a major obstacle to the development of the voluntary sector. For instance, several groups in my constituency have met with an unbending attitude on the part of some public servants, which has discouraged them and killed their initiative. However, I am not blaming these public servants because they often have no choice but to apply the regulations dreamed up in Ottawa by legal officers who have no knowledge of what goes on in the field. I am firmly convinced that if we want to help improve relations between the state and the voluntary sector, we shall have to emphasize the need to leave more freedom of action to local public servants. We shall also have to develop mechanisms which will prevent ministers from being tempted to interfere politically in the distribution of grants. I hope that one of the colleagues of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Atkey), who has just left the House, will give him this message—

An hon. Member: And especially to him!

Mr. Lapierre: Especially to him, as my colleague has said. I believe that the Minister of Employment and Immigration would need very strict regulations—

An hon. Member: Right on.

Mr. Lapierre: —to avoid the temptation of patronage. Indeed I think that in the next few days we will be in a position to say that the temptation was too strong for him to refrain from indulging in—

An hon. Member: —patronage!

Mr. Lapierre: My colleague calls this “patronage”, but I would rather call it “political intervention”—

An hon. Member: Right on.

Mr. Lapierre: —in the Canada Works program.

Business of the House

We should also assess the dependency of the voluntary sector on government. I have seen too many groups established to meet specific needs, with voluntary personnel motivated by an urge to help their fellow man, which federal funds reduced to a state of complete subservience and which had to close shop when finally federal funds dried up. I have also seen profiteers who under the guise of noble intentions found this a way to make a living and appropriated funds for their own personal use.

There can be no complete study of the voluntary sector unless major legal and fiscal reforms are proposed. Well organized lobbies are already making fiscal reform representations to every member in this House. We cannot ignore that proposal, and should assess on its merits the campaign on the theme “tit for tat”.

In these few minutes, Mr. Speaker, I have briefly listed the challenges facing the special committee. We in the official opposition want to meet these challenges, providing our recommendations are acted upon. The hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) suggested yesterday that historically, between the time an issue comes up in Parliament and the moment where significant changes are made, there is a 37-year lag. On behalf of the majority of my colleagues who cannot live that long before they see major changes in the voluntary sector, I express the hope that as soon as our report is tabled on May 31, 1980, the government will act promptly and diligently.

● (1600)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Knowles: May we call it four o'clock?

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has called it four o'clock. Before we look at the clock, would it be possible to ignore it for a few moments and to ignore it at the end of private members' hour for the appropriate time to allow the House to deal with Bill S-10, an act to confirm the authority of the Federal District Commission to have acquired certain lands.

There have been discussions among the house leaders that would permit us to proceed through all stages in the House today, including Committee of the Whole and third reading, so that the House could dispose of that.

If you could get confirmation of that, Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful. And, as well, if you could ignore the clock, both at the beginning and at the end of private members' hour, for the purpose of allowing us to do that, then perhaps we could add the time used to the end of private members' hour.