

*Adjournment Debate*

advised as to the money available to stimulate the economy and create jobs through various programs, one of which being the Special Employment Initiatives Program. The Corporation prepared more than 70 projects aimed at upgrading or building post offices where needed around the country. Forty of these projects were approved and funded for a total of \$5.57 million.

I should point out that this represents a small portion of the Corporation's capital expenditure projects which will amount to between \$20 and \$30 million in 1984-85.

Mr. Speaker, concerning the Special Employment Initiative Program, I should like to say that in the Joliette riding and in others, some special recovery programs have been implemented. Some have even been implemented in the Yukon riding. What can you say to that, Mr. Speaker? But Hon. Members disregard this information and fail to mention these projects. However, when they had a look at the list of 50,000 job creation projects which the Liberal government in Ottawa has implemented over the past few years, the Canadian people realized the moment it was tabled that the Canadian government had done a lot to create jobs.

As far as Post Canada is concerned, there are certainly a number of Conservative ridings which have received funds, including the Sunbury, Fundy Royal and Timiskaming ridings.

Although these three ridings are represented by PC members in the House, they have all received funds however, none of them has risen in the House to criticize the government for the money which Canada Post has invested in their respective ridings.

● (1815)

[English]

INCOME TAX—EXPENSE DEDUCTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREMEN. (B) INCREASE SOUGHT

**Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin-Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to pursue further the question I raised in the House on March 28, 1984, with regard to income tax, specifically expense deductions for volunteer firemen.

I think if you were to review the response I received from the Minister in the House at that time, you will find he indicated that he was aware on March 27 that we had debated a private member's motion, which the Liberals talked out, concerning an increase to the maximum deduction allowed to volunteer firemen. The Minister indicated he would consider increasing the present limit. Then he said he would give it the same sort of consideration he gives all representations regarding future budgets.

In response to my supplementary question, the Minister indicated he would give consideration to the fact that all volunteer firemen would be covered, including those who might receive some sort of token remuneration for the work they had done. I was not really satisfied with the Minister's response on that particular occasion.

I want to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that this issue has really been kicking around for quite some time. I know that after being elected on February 18, 1980, four years ago, a Mr. Charlie McKean came into my Dauphin office on March 9, 1980, to make representation that this expense deduction be increased to \$1,000. His particular representation went back a bit further, he drew my attention to the fact that the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs at their annual meeting on March 31, 1979, had made a request that the income tax deduction be increased to \$1,000. What we are talking about is something that has dragged on for five years, almost half a decade. It is not really a very recent issue.

If you consider the types of increases in expenses that have risen over the last half a decade I think you can see the reason I am rising again to urge the Government to act on the representation I have made, and make again. Again, I just want to point out my disappointment with regard to talking out the issue by various parliamentary secretaries on the other side of the House.

In addition to speaking in the House on various occasions, I have written to the Minister. Just to give you an indication of how longstanding this issue is, Mr. Speaker, on January 26, 1983, as a follow-up to what I said in the House some two weeks previously, I asked the Minister to consider increasing the income tax deduction allowed to \$1,000. He replied that because this issue was under consideration for the forthcoming Budget, that is the one of February 1983, he was not at liberty to elaborate in any great detail upon my representation. When he indicated that he was prepared to give it some further consideration in future Budgets, I was somewhat concerned, to put it mildly, with his response. In the last two weeks I have experienced further consternation simply because I have received no letter subsequent to his statement in the House. For that reason I wanted to raise the matter again today.

● (1820)

I think this issue is important to small communities, especially rural and northern ones. In my own constituency there are 27 such volunteer firemen groups working in various communities. I urge the Government to take my representation seriously and to act upon it. It is extremely important. Otherwise, we will be forced to assume that the Minister will not be giving attention to this matter until the next Budget. We will then have to ask ourselves when will be the next Budget, and will he be the Finance Minister? Here is an opportunity for him to act immediately to meet a need which exists. It is something for which firemen have been awaiting a long time. This issue needs the Minister's immediate, and favourable consideration and attention now. I hope the Parliamentary Secretary will indicate that they are prepared to consider it.

**Mr. Ralph Ferguson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the federal Government fully supports the volunteer movement in Canada and recognizes