

The principal target population of the program would be those who bear a disproportionate share of the unemployment burden, particularly the long-term unemployed.

We are dealing with older workers who are the most difficult to rehire, and the young people who are finding it most difficult to find jobs. Both groups can be targeted by use of an employment tax credit. Why does the Government not bring in an employment tax credit in accordance with the repeated recommendation of the Economic Council of Canada?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I think I have already replied to this question in the House at least twice. The answer is that we do have presently in existence job subsidy programs which have the same effect.

We found, in looking at the tax credit proposals, that that is less attractive to the private sector because the entry into the cash flow businesses, particularly small businesses, is delayed until the completion of the tax form and tax return. However, a direct job subsidy program has a greater impact and is more cost effective because it translates into the immediate cash situation of a firm to its advantage.

We have found, in looking at the dividend program which the Hon. Member has mentioned, and looking at the experience of other countries, that a better mechanism is the kind of job subsidy program which we already have in place.

Mr. McGrath: The Minister knows that the Access Program is targeted to a very small percentage of the unemployed, whereas this program has the advantage of being targeted to all young people who are unemployed, and all unemployed older people.

PROPOSAL TO RESTRUCTURE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SYSTEM

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, let me ask the Minister a question which he seemed to dismiss out of hand earlier today. Does he intend to accept the recommendation of the Council that the Government join with employers and employee associations to study the possibility of restructuring the unemployment insurance system with a view to integrating it much more effectively with job creation and training programs? On the surface that seems to be a very reasonable proposal, given the fact that we are paying out so much money in unemployment insurance. Does the Government intend to accept that recommendation and, if not, why not?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, we do intend to consider very seriously all the recommendations in what is a very serious study. I think the recommendations are very much worthy of review.

I believe I should say at the outset that my major concern and highest priority is job creation. I am not sure that tinkering away or fundamentally changing the basic unemployment insurance structure which we now have is the best way to accomplish that objective. We will study the recommendations

Oral Questions

very seriously. Whether we will be prepared to act in a way which is recommended to us is something which will require some reflection.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

RECOMMENDED CHANGE IN INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. She will be aware that the Economic Council of Canada has a complete section on women and women's issues in its 1983 Report. Recommendation 15 reads, "that the federal Government should consider revising the Income Tax Act so as to convert what are now exemptions for wholly dependent children to income tax credits." Will she tell the House whether she supports the proposal that all deductions—I repeat "all deductions"—be shifted to credits as recommended by the Economic Council of Canada and the National Council on Welfare?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am delighted that the Hon. Member has taken time to read that particular chapter. We had a great deal of co-operation take place between Status of Women Canada and the Economic Council of Canada. I am particularly pleased with the results of that work.

While I have not had a chance to examine the complete Report, I will say to the Hon. Member that many of the suggestions are very useful and this is one which I will take under consideration.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, the Minister has ducked the question. The question is whether she will personally support the proposal that all deductions be shifted to credits. We hear her affirmations about the work that has been done and share that view, but is she prepared, herself, personally to support that shift?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, my record is very clear. I have always said that we must examine the taxation system in order to have a better understanding of how taxation affects women and families. But those decisions are made collectively by Cabinet, of course.

* * *

MEDICAL CARE

DEVELOPMENT OF PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. She will recall that the Commonwealth Health Min-