

gram was initiated, we built in a lot of road blocks and there was too much red tape. As a result of that, the program was not working, so we called in the business community and asked them what was wrong with it. They said there was too much red tape, there were too many road blocks. We were being pressured constantly by a very good critic, namely, the former member for Hamilton West, who indicated that we should remove some of this red tape. This was asked by the opposition parties who said, "For heaven sake, trust the businessmen. These people out there are not crooks. They want to work, they want to create the jobs, but they will not go through all this red tape in the interest of proving their honesty." So we followed that particular program.

In the first instance, I think the program was taken up in large measure in the province of Quebec. We checked with our people there to find out why it was being taken up in Quebec and found that the reason was the leadership given by some officials in the Department of Employment and Immigration who let the businessmen know that this plan was available to them, that they could hire people, that there was a tax credit available to them. Then we removed much of the red tape, not only at the behest of the opposition parties but at the behest of the Canadian business community. As a result of that, the program took off and became very successful.

We did not have all of the protection built in that we had in the original instance, but we felt that the Canadian businessman could be trusted. I think that the figures we are hearing today from the minister are accurate to the degree that they can be. I think this will require further checking and testing because we are dealing with taxpayers' money, but I commend the minister for continuing in this particular vein because this is a good program and is creating jobs.

My question to the minister concerns the time element. When it was my privilege to be the minister, we saw the program taking off and being successful and we needed more money quickly. Is there a time frame with which the minister is faced in order to keep this program operational?

Mr. Axworthy: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member repeat his question?

Mr. Cullen: When I had the privilege of serving in this particular role and the program took off, we had real concern about adequate funding being available. I know that the minister brought this program in almost immediately after the House assembled, and I wonder about the time frame for this program. Are we facing a situation where we might lose momentum as a result of the delays we are facing today and have faced in the past?

Mr. Axworthy: As I pointed out when we introduced this bill two or three days after Parliament opened, the provisions in the bill expired as of March 31. We have tried to maintain some degree of continuity by still issuing application forms, with the caveat that it did require the ultimate approval of Parliament. But in effect, at this very time we are debating

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this bill, there is no employment tax credit program, it has expired, and we are simply asking for an extension.

As I pointed out, we have had well over 20 hours of debate or discussion on this bill. Perhaps I should not say "on this bill", because of the 20 hours only one hour and ten minutes perhaps have been devoted to the bill. The rest of the time has been devoted to a wide variety of fascinating matters that members of the opposition have been prepared to bring forward. In fact, we have spent an inordinate amount of time on what the hon. member for Athabasca said is a very simple bill extending a program that has already been in operation.

So in answer to the hon. member, I have to say that the longer we continue with this, the more difficult it will be to maintain continuity and momentum and it will probably hurt the program.

Mr. Cullen: I have one further suggestion to make to the minister. I have to disagree with my friend opposite, the hon. member for Athabasca, who was talking about using newspaper advertising and bulletins and papers. Our experience with that is that it does not work. I think the average Canadian sees something like 600 advertisements a day in one shape or another. It is only by personal contact in promoting this program that it was made to work in Quebec in the first instance, and it is what is making it work today. I hope the minister will not say to his officials, "Do not go out to promote this program." Just the opposite should be true.

● (1600)

Mr. Hargrave: Mr. Chairman, I have a short comment for the Minister of Employment and Immigration and hopefully his staff. It relates to a very specific aspect of employment, that is, the question of farm labour. In my own case I suppose it is even more specific. I want to talk very briefly about the help required in cattle operations in western Canada. That is my special interest.

I believe it was last Friday that the hon. member for Bow River made what I think were the only remarks on the subject of farm labour in these proceedings in Committee of the Whole. The minister may remember them. I think they were appropriate remarks. He spoke from experience and long years of a genuine interest in the subject. At that time he reminded the committee about the problem of perhaps inexperienced and new farm helpers which are available from time to time through employment offices for work on farms. Also he mentioned the concern of the farmer employer about very, very expensive modern-day equipment. He spoke of tractors and implements that were worth up to \$30,000.

I share that concern, but I want to comment a little more about the type of manpower I can hopefully get from manpower offices which might be of more help to us in the cattle business. It is not an easy job to convince young people, especially, to come out into the country and work on a cattle ranch. This is not a critical comment about the minister and his department, but there are valid reasons for this situation,