

Employment Tax Credit Act

them. I would like to see them made eligible. Is that too much to ask? Is that information I am not going to get either?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to defend the actions of past governments. If there were regulations—

Mr. McCain: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I did not mention criticism of the past government. He can throw that back as many times as he likes. These decisions were made through his office while he was minister and had nothing to do with decisions made earlier. What I am concerned about is the regulations.

Mr. Axworthy: The program that we announced a week ago on Monday is a new program. There are no regulations for it. The hon. member may have some conspiratorial sense that somehow there is a hidden set of regulations. There are no regulations other than the guidelines which we have set to make the communities service program available to non-profit, voluntary community organizations to serve a work of genuine value in that community. We base our judgment of those upon the recommendations that come from the constituency advisory group. The problem which the hon. member faced in the past was that the system set up by the previous government did not allow any community input.

Mr. McCain: No.

Mr. Axworthy: The decisions were made by the joint committee of federal and provincial civil servants and the recommendations came forward. We altered that to allow hon. members to have some say. We have now restored the constituency advisory group to provide an assessment of local community priorities. That is the determining factor. I have tried to tell hon. members that three or four times. I do not know how to emphasize it, underline or dramatize it any more. The choice on priorities will be for the advisory group that he will recommend and nominate.

Mr. McCain: May I take up a minute of your time, Mr. Chairman. The opposition has two choices in a case of this kind, and it is very difficult to decide which choice is the proper discharge of duty. One is to walk out and leave this bill and let the government pass it at any time that they choose because the opposition has been confronted with an absolute refusal to co-operate, to try to understand the questions which are asked, to try to understand the problems which are presented.

It is our job to try to represent our constituents. I spoke about a regulation. The minister has avoided his responsibility completely on that because it has nothing to do with the advisory board, nothing to do with members' influence. The only concern was the refusal or acceptance of those projects I forwarded to the minister. The fact is that they were eliminated by regulation by the staff of his department. I want that regulation changed so that the money spent in my constituency will be of long-term benefit to the greatest number of people. That is what we are here for; that is what I am trying to accomplish. I challenge the hon. member for Eglinton-Law-

rence to say again that I am wasting my time, when I am trying to look after my constituents and their long-term benefit. If I cannot achieve that, I am through.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gimaiel: Mr. Chairman, I am happy to speak on the extension of the employment tax credit program. I know that program well, having worked in a Canada Manpower Centre as an adviser, and I am in a position to tell you that it is a little gem, and it is so for several reasons.

First of all, when that project was created, the government tried to set up a program that could apply without adding to the pile of paper work an employer normally has to cope with when he operates under a government program.

It has always been said that, whether here or elsewhere at any level of government, there is always too much red tape, too many meetings with officials, too many all sorts of things. If some of my hon. colleagues ever worked with the tax credit program, the only paper the Canada Manpower Centre fills in is a yellow form that certifies the hiring of an employee, and the employer at the end of the year only has to send a form to Revenue Canada on which he puts the salary, and that is all. That is it and it is an incentive that people had a little difficulty with at first because there are two departments involved, the Department of National Revenue and the Department of Employment and Immigration. At first there was a little lack of confidence between the officials of each department. In the third year of application, it was a phenomenal success. If the program is being extended today for another year, it is quite simply because it is a necessity.

I come from an area where the rate of unemployment varies regularly between 15 per cent and 20 per cent. We have a huge problem to live with, and that problem is all the more serious as it affects particularly young people. In an area like mine with multinational industries, most of those industries are unionized, the unions are very strong, and like any good union, they protect the seniority of their workers, and that is normal. But the result of all that is that those who have to suffer from the problem of unemployment are the young people.

I heard a while ago some colleagues criticize the existing job-creation program which this government launched in the early seventies, and all I can say is that I wonder, had we not spent that money to create so many jobs every year, year after year, how our young people could have kept their self-respect. Of course, the job-creation activity is not creating permanent jobs, but jobs to allow young people to subsist while the real work problems are being resolved. By the way, we have had such a large number of people coming out on the labour market, a number larger than any other country has seen, when women started to go out to work and when young people from the generation born during the years 1945 to 1960 started to appear on the labour market 15 years ago. There were too