

*Supply*

House of Commons on June 2. He indicated at that time that he proposed to bring in another program offering incentives so that persons with severe employment problems might be employed in the private sector. I would like to take this opportunity to ask the minister when the government intends to announce the new program.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the hon. member for his very fine words. He illustrates a point which has been made several times in the discussion of these estimates. There must be a very strong and very forceful sense of leadership from the national government to meet our employment training programs. We must develop a national employment strategy which covers the country from one end to the other and ensures equal access and opportunity for all Canadians. I feel this point must be underlined time and time again in demonstrating the direction in which we must go in the next four or five years. We cannot afford to let our programs become fragmented or our approaches divided simply along provincial and regional lines. There must be a national approach to programs. Therefore, it is very important to support the programs put forward in the budget and the national energy program which would give us the resources to meet those demands.

● (2230)

As far as the question concerning an additional program to provide incentives for the private sector to hire disadvantaged workers is concerned, we have been working on that program for three or four months, culminating in the examination we have made of the industrial adjustment programs which must be brought in to respond to the issues of declining industries and declining communities. We have taken some time because we wanted to ensure that we consulted adequately with the different groups involved.

In this case I want to pay particular tribute to the work of the parliamentary committee on the disabled which is chaired by the hon. member for Don Valley East. I have now had two or three meetings with that committee which is comprised of members from both sides of the House. They have provided me with very valuable information concerning the employment problems experienced by those who are handicapped in Canada. Not only have they provided me with their experience, they have some very forceful and specific recommendations. We really wanted to wait until we had the ability to gather the information and ideas developed by that task force.

I met with them approximately ten days ago. We will be incorporating much of the findings and proposals of that parliamentary task force into our own work. Now that we have those findings, we will be able to present to cabinet submissions for an employment program dealing with the needs of the disadvantaged. If we are lucky and able to get proper scheduling on the cabinet timetable, I hope to be able to make some announcement of those programs either just before Christmas or certainly within two or three weeks after. We wanted to wait to make sure we had the full information.

The program has not yet been fully decided by cabinet, so I cannot outline the details. But it will follow the basic principle of providing incentives to private employers to hire those with work disadvantages. We hope it will provide us with a certain approach which could be used in the development of a more broad-based employment strategy in the years ahead.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to convey to the minister that his immigration office in Mississauga is first class and that Jack McMillan, the key officer in charge, has the sensitivity and ability to do good work for Canada and has been doing so. The minister knows that I have a great number of immigration problems in my growing city, and I should like to ask him a number of questions with respect to them.

My first problem is the feeling of people that their member of Parliament can somehow work miracles for them, that the Immigration Act is not a question of one's status but who one knows and what strings one can pull. Unfortunately this spring the minister was involved in the case of Giuseppe Calamusa. I am not questioning the minister's honesty in this. I am looking at the compassionate grounds on which he managed to work things out for Mr. Calamusa and his family.

The minister will appreciate that the rest of us are members of Parliament and unfortunately not ministers of immigration. Therefore, we cannot do the wonderful things that were done for this particular person. Also he will appreciate that as members of Parliament we have people with immigration problems that are perhaps much more serious and at least as deserving, certainly in the eyes of the applicant, as those of Mr. Calamusa. When the minister bent over backwards and managed to exercise his discretion in favour of a family which, on any reasonable interpretation of the act, should have had their deportation confirmed, he leaves us as members faced with the position that the law is one way for some and not for others in the eyes of people with immigration problems.

I was wondering if the minister could tell us—and I hope he does not use all my time—what he can do to provide some sense of rule and regulation in this act so that we can firmly tell constituents that if they fall within the terms of the purview of the minister something can be done, and if not, they cannot expect any miracles to happen on their behalf just because they happen to know someone. I bring this seriously to the minister's attention because it is a problem faced by members on both sides of the House.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Chairman, I find it a little unusual that the hon. member would raise one case because I see around me seven, eight or nine members of the House who in the last month or so have brought cases to me for adjudication, where they wanted some settlement based upon reasons of compassion or whatever. I could not give the exact number, but a fair number have been adjudicated thusly. So, it would be wrong to say that there has been only one miracle; there are no miracles, but judgments are applied.

The hon. member himself has made representations on behalf of some of his constituents. We have looked at them