

in the next couple of years? In which months are we likely to see the highest unemployed number, and how many people is that likely to be?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, without wanting to indulge the time of the House even more than we already have on this bill, I should like to remind the hon. member for Calgary West that he has already asked that question and he has already received an answer.

Mr. Hawkes: I agree with the minister that I have asked the question in several different ways, but I have not yet received an answer. If one would like to check *Hansard*, one could find that out. Could the minister tell us how many of the research officials in his department are involved in the business of forecasting in relation to unemployment?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid that the hon. member for Calgary West has developed a strong mental block about the matter at hand, and perhaps about other matters as well. We tried to indicate to him in committee the other night that the responsibility for forecasting economic conditions in this country was primarily that of the Department of Finance. The Minister of Finance already presented his forecasts to this House in his economic statement several weeks ago. Those are the forecasts upon which the general projections of the government are made. Our own analysis is to examine the particular regional breakdowns and demographic breakdowns which I gave the hon. member the other evening. If he wants to refresh his memory, I would suggest that he follow his own advice and read *Hansard*.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Chairman, sometimes it is difficult to read through the rhetoric and get to the facts. But I suggest that there are no figures in *Hansard* given by the minister in relationship to the kind of breakdown he just talked about.

I will switch my focus for a while. The minister has sat through several hours of debate in relationship to this bill. During the course of that debate, members on both sides of the House raised several issues which suggest that the bill in fact may be somewhat weaker than it appears at first glance. I think we should remember that this legislation has been in place for a couple of years now, but one of the issues which has been raised is that the jobs are not truly created jobs. In fact the employment tax credit bill is used by employers to fund jobs which already exist or would have existed in any case. Does the minister have any research on the proportion of jobs he would classify as being created under this legislation versus jobs that would ordinarily exist?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, again to repeat, I think for about the fourth time in this House, when an employer applies for assistance under the tax credit bill he is required to put down exactly the number of workers in his physical establishment at the present time and to indicate the additional workers he actually wishes to hire through the tax credit program. That is a condition of the application.

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There is absolutely no way, unless we are somehow to put a stethoscope against the internal workings of every employer's man who makes an application, to determine whether or not in fact in the future he would be hiring those people. But we are satisfied, after some margin and an interim evaluation, that the incrementality of the program is around 60 per cent. So, that is a judgment call. At this point in time there is absolutely no way of establishing firm criteria until we have had far more experience with the program. It has only been in operation for two years.

I can indicate to the hon. member that similar types of programs have been put into effect in other countries, in Europe and in the United States. They have had varying degrees of success, ranging all the way from 20 per cent to around the 60 per cent or 70 per cent level. The best way the hon. member could probably get his answer is if he and his colleagues allow us to pass this bill, so that we can put it in operation and go on further with the experience of the bill to see how it works.

Mr. Hawkes: I think the minister is suggesting that we give him a blank cheque without examination. To members on this side of the House who value freedom of speech and the freedom of inquiry, that suggestion is totally unacceptable.

Is the minister familiar with a recent report out of the Brookings Institute where similar tax credit programs were examined? If he is familiar with that, could he tell us what their experience was in terms of the measurement of whether or not jobs were truly created?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I will simply tell the member that we do not allow our employment policy to be made by the Americans. Therefore, we do not use American criteria to judge the success of our own program. If he in fact wants to have a debate on American employment programs, I suspect that he should go down there and engage in a congressional committee debate. We use our own evaluation in our own programs that are designed by this Parliament and by this government to suit Canadian conditions.

Mr. Hawkes: Could the minister make a commitment at this time to give us the research study on which some of his answers are based in terms of Canadian experience? Is he prepared to provide that study to the opposition?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I am quite prepared to give the study to anybody who would like to have it, as soon as it is finished and completed and after this bill is passed and we have had a chance to do a proper evaluation.

Mr. Hawkes: Is the minister saying that he is prepared to provide the study after the bill is passed? Is that a condition, that we must pass this bill before he will give us the study? Is that what he just said?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Calgary West is really trying to suggest that somehow—we have now been in debate on this bill for an exceptionally long time, which is fine with me. If he is so all-fired interested in getting