

Employment Tax Credit Act

this country who are being subsidized by the oil import pricing system. It is a different issue to equalize the pricing system across this country. The policy issue in terms of expenditure—

The Chairman: With all due respect to the hon. member, the debate seems to be straying from the bill which is before us. May I invite both the minister and the hon. member to confine their remarks to the bill.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Chairman, I find that I am intrigued by that shifting data base. In light of the information which the minister has provided to us today, and I thank him for it, I am persuaded that the bill which is before us needs amending. I think we are looking at a long-term unemployment problem. I would therefore move that:

1. Subsections 7(2) and (3) of the Employment Tax Credit Act are repealed and the following substituted therefor:

"(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the "program period" commences on March 8, 1978, and ends on March 31, 1984.

(3) No agreement may be entered into under subsection (1) after March 31, 1983, and an agreement entered into in respect of eligible employment that commences after that day is of no force or effect."

(4) Notwithstanding subsections (2) and (3), before March 31, 1983, the dates referred to in subsections (1) and (2) may be replaced by such future dates as specified in a joint resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

The Chairman: Before ruling on the amendment, the Chair would call the attention of the committee to the fact that clause 1 is under discussion at this time. The Chair would like to defer ruling on the admissibility of the amendment and the form in which it came before us until it has had an opportunity to study the amendment in detail.

I would invite hon. members to consider the discussion of clause 1 which is before us. I propose not to rule on the admissibility of the amendment until I have had an opportunity to examine it.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. Members: Carry.

The Chairman: For the purposes of proceeding, the Chair will accept the amendment placed before the House on clause 1. Shall I read the amendment?

Mr. Axworthy: Dispense.

Mr. Hawkes: May I speak to the amendment?

The Chairman: There has been a request that the amendment be read. It is moved by the hon. member for Calgary West, seconded by the hon. member for Burlington:

1. Subsections 7(2) and (3) of the Employment Tax Credit Act are repealed and the following substituted therefor:

"(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the "program period" commences on March 8, 1978, and ends on March 31, 1984.

(3) No agreement may be entered into under subsection (1) after March 31, 1983, and an agreement entered into in respect of eligible employment that commences after that day is of no force or effect."

(4) Notwithstanding subsections (2) and (3), before March 31, 1983, the dates referred to in subsections (1) and (2) may be replaced by such future dates as specified in a joint resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

The Chair has ruled that the amendment is in order. The hon. member for Calgary West may speak to the amendment.

● (2120)

Mr. Hawkes: If I could just take a minute or two I will explain the intent of the amendment. Of course the government has a majority and so can pass or reject this amendment, but on this side of the House we are persuaded that the country is facing a fairly long and very severe period of unemployment. I think it is clear from the minister's own testimony that through an employer tax credit provision there will be a maximum increase in publicly supported employment for a minimal dollar cost.

The intent of my amendment is to extend that provision for an additional two years. I think this would probably see us through most of the unemployment crisis because it is an employer tax credit program and it could defer the expenditure to as late as 1989. Not every employer would claim the tax credit immediately and the budgetary situation might ease in the years ahead. That is one of the advantages.

The additional clause which I propose would provide maximum flexibility for change through a joint resolution of both Houses, and also, the date could be altered. I think the mechanism for altering the date would enable the government to provide the greatest possible number of jobs at the lowest possible cost. The official opposition is convinced that those jobs are needed today and that they will be needed in the future. We would like hon. members on the government side to give serious consideration to the amendments and to vote for them.

The Chairman: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Amendment negatived: Yeas, 12; nays, 28.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time?

Some hon. Members: Now.

Mr. Axworthy moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.