

Employment Tax Credit Act

even when there are areas and regions which have a good supply of labour in these times of high unemployment.

Of course, the reasons for this relate to the fact that those kinds of jobs are a long way from the bright lights, especially for young people. I can tell members that that is a major factor in this day and age. Another reason is that it comes as quite a shock to a young person, whose idea of cattle ranching is an image he has picked up from watching western movies on television, that we have to work in the winter and keep ourselves warm outdoors all day. He loses his enthusiasm in a hurry when that situation becomes apparent to him.

We in the cattle business have the same problem with respect to expensive machinery. We hesitate to allow inexperienced help to operate that machinery, even if we are resigned to that fact. I am thinking of a modern-day, 14-foot, self-propelled hay swather which can be worth up to \$35,000. We are faced with the same situation. It is just as significant that we have trained stock horses. Sometimes it takes five, six or seven years to properly train a stock horse to work with cattle. We hesitate about allowing inexperienced help to ride and use those horses.

The type of labour in which I am interested for my own operation is full-time, year-round help. When we hire them, we hope it is by the year and that they stay for ten years. Of course, experienced help who would qualify in these areas are very difficult to hire. If they are very experienced they work on their own, which is understandable. A few times I have gone to the manpower office and have been successful in getting help. More recently I find the local officials seem to feel that they should specify a minimum wage which as a prospective employer I should be expected to pay. A good question is: How much is an experienced man worth?

My own experience in this specialized field is that I always have to pay more than perhaps the going rate in order to entice them, if you like, to come out and work on a cattle ranch. But it becomes a little annoying when Manpower officials suggest that there is a certain wage, regardless of whether one agrees with it or not, that is expected to be maintained. I should like to ask the minister whether that is official policy and what comments he might have on that.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I think the contributions made by the hon. member and the ones made previously by the hon. member for Bow River have drawn attention to the very specific problem of providing a proper work force in the agricultural field. I took note of this problem last evening and I will address myself to it.

As far as the specific questions are concerned, the program is available to farmers if they would like to use it. In the last year of the program some 2 per cent to 3 per cent of the 50,000 jobs actually created were in the field of agriculture, farming or animal husbandry. I agree it is a small number, but probably the reason for it is the nature of the occupation as well as the nature of the program. It is not designed specifically to address the concerns of a livestock raiser.

The issue of minimum wage is something over which we have absolutely no control. Obviously it is within provincial jurisdiction. They set the minimum wage as well as the wage rates in various training programs. We are now in a position where, within the next 12 months or so, we will be negotiating with the provinces concerning the Adult Occupational Training Act where we put out a substantial amount of money but do not necessarily control the type of training being offered in each of the provinces. I will make a point in those negotiations to raise some of the concerns about agricultural training.

I should like to make one comment to the hon. member which perhaps is something that goes back to his view of the attitude of young Canadian people toward working on farms. We operate an exchange program of farm students between certain European countries and our own. Several weeks ago I met with the sponsors of that program. They indicated that they can recruit enough trained and interested students from Europe, but that they cannot attract similar numbers of Canadian students to go overseas to learn about farm methods in Denmark, The Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries or West Germany. They feel that one of the reasons is that there seems to be a negative attitude toward going into farm work at the present time. It is something we will have to address and perhaps something our department, in combination with the Minister of Agriculture, can look at.

Mr. Hargrave: I have some further comments, Mr. Chairman. I must admit that perhaps my comments are not specifically on the application of this particular program, but certainly they are on the question of farm labour. I point out that these additional programs about which the minister spoke do not lend themselves to long-time, full-time employment. We in the cattle operations are quite resigned—and have been for many years—to the fact that we have to train our own young people. I find it interesting that the best source of young people really genuinely interested in this field is people who come from a long distance away, such as from the province of Ontario or Quebec. They travel a couple of thousand miles and show a genuine interest in sticking to it. I have had much better results from that source of employment.

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It is rather ironic that about the only time the local young people, especially those of the cities, seem to be willing and anxious to come out—to put it rather crudely, to do us a favour and work for us—is when they have unpaid bills on their financed cars, which they will lose if they do not get a payment in pretty quick. Under those circumstances, they suddenly become interested in our type of work, but winter usually scares them off.

Again, coming back to my one point, I am sure that the minister is aware that there are no minimum wages for agriculture-related work, certainly not in Alberta. I am not questioning whether or not there should be minimum wages, because there is a reason in the history of that situation as to why there are no minimum wages. Is it the policy of the officers in the field to suggest a minimum wage which must be