

Canada Child Care Act

around and decided that the prison needed a new gymnasium, a new television room and new facilities for visiting. So he ordered there should be \$3 million made available to help that new prison. His assistant was with him and he did not understand this. He said to the Cabinet Minister: "We just finished visiting a day care centre which was really in need and you gave them \$100. We visit a prison and you give \$3 million. Why the discrepancy?" The Cabinet Minister shrugged and said: "Well, I am not likely to end up in a day care centre".

The Conservatives promised there would be a day care program put in place, but they promised under the pressure of an election campaign. I do not think the Prime Minister's heart was really in that program. It was one of those things he felt compelled to do, the same as he felt compelled to say there was not going to be any patronage. Do you remember that, Madam Speaker? He said there was not going to be any patronage under the Conservative Government, that it was going to be a different kind of situation. In the same way he promised there was going to be an adequate child care package brought in, but the Government has not really had its heart in it. There is still that ideological strata in the Conservative Party that regards child care as being somehow second rate, that what we really should have are parents who will stay home 24 hours a day and look after their children. Somehow child care is not really what the Government wants for Canada's children, so I think the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), regardless of what he might think, has some difficulty with his own caucus.

I also think there was a desire not to bring this legislation forward too quickly because the Conservatives did not want it to see the light of day. They did not want it exposed. They knew it would not stand up to criticism. So they delayed, delayed and delayed to the last possible moment and they are now trying to rush it through in the waning days of Babylon, hoping they can get it in the public eye and be able to say they fulfilled their promise. They hope that the people will not realize what a shoddy piece of work it is until after the election.

I do not think the people of Canada are going to be deceived by this shoddy Bill. All the witnesses who appeared before the committee pointed to its inadequacies, pointed out ways in which it should be improved. The Canadian public will also look at this legislation and, as *The Ottawa Citizen* reported on Saturday, they will reject it as being completely inadequate, in some places wasteful, in other places, mean, and in fact nothing more than an attempted election bribe.

Mr. Young: Madam Speaker, on the last point raised by my colleague, whether or not people would be fooled by this piece of legislation, I have received several letters from constituents over the last several days. They talk about the present crisis in day care. They certainly are not fooled. They have analysed what this Government has had to say and have concluded that at the end of the seven-year period, there will be no additional day care spaces. In fact, there will probably be less day care

spaces available than what there would otherwise be under the present arrangement. I want to ask the Hon. Member if he sees it in exactly the same way as my constituents.

Mr. Manly: Absolutely, Madam Speaker. We pointed out time and again, and I think the message is getting through to everyone except the Conservatives—although perhaps they understand it and just do not want to act on it—that at the end of this seven year period under this new Act, Bill C-144, there will be fewer child care spaces in Canada than if we had left the present situation in place, inadequate as it is. We know that action needs to be taken. There are hundreds of thousands of Canadian children who could benefit from child care. We see it as a need. The Conservative Government seems to see it as a burden. It sees only the cost. It does not see the investment. Individual parents are concerned that the Government invest something in the future of their children. The Government is not doing it. As a Parliament we should be concerned about the Government not only investing in individual children but investing in the future of Canada's children as a whole. We are not doing it. We are failing. The Government has failed.

• (1610)

[Translation]

Mrs. Monique B. Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take part in the third reading debate on Bill C-144. Allow me first, Madam Speaker, to go back to the reply I was given earlier by my colleague the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) about the federal contribution toward the maintenance of child care services after 1995. I referred my colleague to clause 3 of the Bill and he referred me to its preamble. I would like to put on record, Madam Speaker, that the first paragraph of the preamble says that after 1995 the Government will contribute to the maintenance of the expanded child care system. It should be obvious to anyone who can read and understand legislation that that is not only included in the preamble but also in clause 3, and it has always been agreed that after 1995 the federal Government will continue to contribute 50 per cent of the maintenance cost of child care services.

My colleague also mentioned what the former Liberal Government did for child care services. I wish to remind him that in 1984 the Canada Assistance Plan provided \$25 million for all Canadian children who needed care services. It is estimated that under the Bill introduced, according to our objectives of doubling the number of day care spaces in the next seven years, by then, in 1995, the federal Government should be contributing \$800 million per year for child care services.

I also had, Madam Speaker, the opportunity to hear the leader of the official Opposition this morning and I would like to express my astonishment. Where was he this summer? What does he know of the day care Bill? How can his speechwriters tackle issues they know nothing about? Why haven't