

Canada Child Care Act

such quick study of such a major item. The Government is promoting its child care legislation. The Opposition and many groups across the country have found fault with that legislation, but those groups were only entitled to two days of hearings in front of a House of Commons committee. That is almost unheard of.

The Government has said that this Bill will cost billions of dollars. This is an election promise that was made in 1984. It took the Government four years—almost four years to the day—to introduce this legislation into the House of Commons. Yet there are people from my riding, people from western Canada, who were not given the opportunity to come before the committee.

I am not surprised that the Government at this stage is still cleaning up its technical amendments because it never gave people a chance to come in front of that committee. It never gave that committee a chance to travel. It never allowed people from the North, from the West, from the East, to come in front of that committee. I think that was completely unfair and is indicative of the way this Government has run roughshod over the people who are concerned about child care—mothers, families, and grandparents. It is indicative of the arrogance of this Government and it is one of the reasons it will not be re-elected.

• (1130)

Motion No. 3 (Mr. Epp, Provencher) agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Motion No. 15 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Vancouver East is in order and will be debated and voted on separately.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East) moved:

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-144 be amended in Clause 3 by adding immediately after line 2 at page 4 the following:

“(3) Upon execution of agreements, amendment to that agreement or renewal of an agreement, a notice shall be published, in relation thereof, in the *Canada Gazette*. These agreements will be available upon request from the Department of National Health and Welfare.”

She said: Mr. Speaker, in a way, this motion is very similar to the Private Member's Bill to which I referred earlier. It contains the same principle, the principle of access to information.

It is quite often difficult for organizations, the public at large, and clients of the welfare system to get general information about matters that affect their lives and their tax dollars. In our experience, it has been difficult to obtain regulations of the Canada Health Act and information about the Act. Similarly, it is difficult to obtain information about what the provinces are spending or not spending under the Canada Assistance Plan. We wanted to ensure that there be a way of publishing information relating to child care and that this be compulsory so that the public will have access to this information.

We are proposing therefore that when agreements are made between the federal Government and individual provinces, agreements that will likely be different in each case, or when there are amendments to or renewals of the agreements, something which we would like to see every five years, incidentally, this must be made public. We are suggesting that that information be published in *The Canada Gazette*.

Furthermore, since *The Canada Gazette* would contain only very general references, and many Canadians do not know about *The Canada Gazette*, we feel that these agreements should be public information available upon request from the Department of National Health and Welfare. We believe that this is quite important.

In committee, the Minister did agree to publication of the notice of these agreements and renewal or amendment of the agreements being published in *The Canada Gazette* and that they would be available from the Department of National Health and Welfare. Therefore, we expect that there will be unanimous consent for this amendment.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker, there is not unanimous consent for the amendment. The argument put forward by the Hon. Member in her last comments has already covered this area, and I will tell Hon. Members why in a moment.

I fully agree that the public should have full access to notification of any agreements or any amendments to agreements or any curtailment of agreements. There is no problem with that, and in fact the amendment in legislative committee which was accepted unanimously by all Members does just that.

Second, through gazetting any changes to agreements or any new agreements entered into by the Government or any provinces, as is the case under the Canada Assistance Plan, people are given the opportunity to study the agreements. Quite frankly, there is a logistical problem in terms of publication of all the agreements. There is obviously a cost factor involved as well.

Additionally, there is a problem with the technical form of the amendment. The Department of National Health and Welfare need not be responsible for the distribution of these government documents. As well, the changes in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons must be taken into consideration when dealing with this amendment.

Hon. Members should be reminded of the new Standing Orders of the House, although we are working under interim Standing Orders, but they could of course become permanent. As you well know from your vast experience, Mr. Speaker, things around here that are temporary temporarily become permanent.

Under the Standing Orders, all these reports are immediately the subject and the property of the respective parliamentary committee. Therefore, the debate in the legislative committee