

obliged to go to work. The circumstances of the three ladies were different. One was a widow, but in all three cases the women were obliged to find daycare centres or kindergartens in which to leave their children between the hours of approximately 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. Each approached the problem from a different point of view. In one case, because a mother lived nearby she was able to leave the children there. Another left the children with a neighbour, and the third put her children into a daycare centre. Of course, not everyone has a mother or mother-in-law available and it is not always easy to find a kind neighbour.

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, in this day and age I think we have to recognize that the working mother—or for that matter a working father whose wife must of necessity go to work—should have access to controlled facilities on an equal basis. When I say an equal basis, that is because what is happening at the present time—and this is the reason I brought the motion forward—is that the government has indicated its willingness to provide space and maintenance, and then it has indicated that it is going to wash its hands of the operation. I do not believe that the government is going to be able to do exactly that.

When I put this motion on the Order Paper, I asked for communications dealing with construction standards and health standards. The first thing the government will have to do is to make sure that it conforms to the construction standards that apply in the various provinces. In order to do that, it should be aware of what those standards are.

At the present time the Department of Public Works has under construction a daycare centre in the city of Ottawa which I understand is listed as costing some \$250,000. Rumour has it that the department is likely to spend in excess of \$350,000 to build it and, in fact, one person who should know indicated to me yesterday that it might cost in excess of \$400,000. At that point the facility is to be turned over to a corporation which is to run it on a self-supporting basis. In other words, the daycare centre is to be a self-supporting facility.

The implication and the philosophy is that the daycare centres are to be provided for those who can afford to pay and for those who are willing to pay. If no federal moneys were involved, we might accept that approach. However, if the government is prepared to put \$200,000, \$300,000 or \$400,000 into a daycare centre for some 40 children, then the government is financially involved and is, in fact, subsidizing the children who use it.

Under these circumstances we have no choice—at least I hope we have no choice—but to ensure that these facilities, financed out of the public purse, shall be available to all children on an equal basis. I will go further and suggest that they shall be available to the children of the parents who have the greatest need. That means, of course, the parents who cannot afford high fees for a daycare centre.

All I know about the charges at the present time is that the figure \$75 per week is being bandied about. One can translate that into a cost of \$650 per month for two children. I have to

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ask myself if there is a bus driver on the hill or a secretary living alone or, for that matter, anyone working in the cafeterias or anyone in the public service in Ottawa at that level who can afford that kind of fee for children in a daycare centre.

What I am saying is that if the federal government intends to venture into this field, then it has to be with full subsidization; otherwise there must be no federal financial involvement whatsoever. In my opinion it makes no sense that we should spend huge sums of money to provide the facilities unless we carry through and provide to the parents who do not have the means themselves, the necessary grants to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to share the facilities.

I feel very strongly on the subject, Mr. Speaker. As a parent I feel that I have had the privilege of seeing my children brought through the kindergarten system. In fact, I was able to see my daughter, who will be ten years old next week, take her first grade in a private kindergarten. Now she is one year ahead of the other girls in her particular class. I would like that opportunity to be available to every child. I suggest that the government must very seriously reconsider its approach. The President of the Treasury Board issued his news release in June. Hopefully he will issue another news release indicating that from here on in we intend, as a federal government, to ensure that daycare facilities in the public service will be built and available on an equal basis for all children.

● (1720)

**Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West):** Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House of the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) provides us with an opportunity not only to deal with the specifics of his request for documents relating to daycare centres, but it allows us to discuss in a more general way the subject of daycare which has risen to serious eminence in Canada over the past decade.

My association with daycare goes back to the late 1960s when, in the city of Halifax, the governors of an institution which was previously known as St. Joseph's Orphanage realized and recognized the changing times and the need to provide a different form of child care beyond the old tradition of the orphanage. Those forwardminded persons developed an institution which became known as St. Joseph's Day Care Centre. I believe it was one of the first substantial institutions of that kind in the area, although other nursery schools and institutions which might have been called daycare centres had been previously established. But it was the first effort of which I am aware to establish a substantial institution based upon developing principles which are now very much a part of the daycare system.

I was involved as a member of the board of directors of that institution. I was very pleased to be a part of the developing concept which we were able to implement and bring to life in the new daycare centre.

Also I was equally pleased, at the time I served as legislative counsel for the province of Nova Scotia, to be involved as a draftsman in what I believe was one of the first pieces of