

*Social Development Ministry*

In my own province we have seen the Conservative government not only not match the grants it gets from the federal government, but it has also used the federal government funding to reduce its share of the cost of paying for medical insurance very substantially. During the campaign the Liberal candidate in Winnipeg-Assiniboine, together with the present Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin), promised that a Liberal government would stop that kind of theft—because that is what it is—on the part of the provincial government. Well, we have seen what has happened since this government was elected. Despite repeated requests and proposals from hon. members of our party, the minister has refused to act. The minister has had the lame excuse that she would wait until the Hall commission made its report. I happen to think that the present Minister of National Health and Welfare is one of the best ministers in the present government, but that is not what she was saying during the election campaign. She was not saying that she would wait and that the Liberal government would wait until the Hall commission reported; she said that they would take action and that they would take it quickly.

**An hon. Member:** More Liberal flimflam.

**Mr. Orlikow:** As my colleague says, more Liberal flimflam, and from a minister from whom one would have expected a good deal more.

I want to deal with one more example of the kinds of programs we need and which are going to be hurt by what I believe to be the virtual freezing of fundings for programs, which is implicit in the speech which the minister made yesterday. An increasing percentage of the female population of this country is working. In fact, the percentage of women working is rapidly approaching the percentage of the male labour force. That is not surprising, given the cost of living. Given the cost particularly of purchasing a home in most Canadian cities at the present time, it is almost axiomatic that if a young married couple wants to buy a home, both husband and wife have to work in order to earn the down payment and then to meet the high monthly payments which are required because of our high mortgage interest rates. I am sure there is not a member of this Parliament who has not given up trying to canvass during an election campaign in the day time in most parts of his or her constituency because there is nobody home. Both husbands and wives are out working.

One of the effects of wives with young children having to be out at work is that we have tens of thousands of young children who are not properly or adequately looked after while their mothers and fathers are both working. In every city we can find fairly young children who finish school at three thirty or four o'clock and who wander around the streets by themselves because their mothers are not home until five or five thirty in the afternoon.

What has the government done about that? How have governments, federal and provincial, reacted to that situation? Well, we know that child care centres are few and far between. It is not uncommon for parents to experience a six-month

waiting period for child care centre space. In 1978 there were 695,000 children under the age of six. Of these, only 73,000 were enrolled in supervised child care programs. Lack of accessible and affordable child care has forced 90 per cent of parents to place their children in unregulated facilities. Child care centre space costs on an average between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per pre-school child per year. Let us compare that with the \$1,000 maximum child care income tax deduction. Government subsidies are available to those in need or those likely to be in need, but subsidy eligibility is so restrictive that 70 per cent of available moneys go to the children of single parents or "at risk" children. The result is that day care centre space is available only to the rich and to the poor. Present cost-sharing arrangements between the three levels of government are totally inadequate. Under the present funding scheme the federal government takes no responsibility for site, salary or equipment costs. Subsidies for those with proven need which are cost-shared 50-50 by federal and provincial governments are insufficient.

In addition, provincial governments are under no compulsion to match federal subsidies for child care. Child care workers are traditionally female, underpaid and unorganized. In addition to poor benefits and largely unsatisfactory working conditions, the pay is low. Average incomes range from \$7,000 to \$10,000 a year. The majority of child care workers do not belong to unions and have no job protection.

Along with many non-political organizations such as women's organizations and organizations representing poor people, members of this party have been urging federal and provincial governments to begin at least trying to meet the problems of child care, which I have outlined very briefly, in a well thought out and organized manner. At least let there be a beginning. I can only conclude from listening to the minister's speech that the government has given up the task before it has really started, because the minister has said that there is really no new money available. We in our party do not accept the argument that there is no new money available. We believe that this country is wealthy enough and has the resources to provide for the needs of its people, some of whom I have mentioned in my speech today.

Let me indicate two ways by which we can find the money which is necessary. First, we have one of the highest rates of unemployment of any of the industrialized countries in the western world. It has been estimated that if, instead of the over 8 per cent unemployment we now have and the 9 per cent unemployment estimated by such organizations as Wood Gundy for the last part of 1980 and the first part of 1981, we were to have 4 per cent unemployment, which for many years was the figure for unemployment which the Economic Council of Canada calculated as meaning full employment in this country, we would be producing \$5 billion more in the way of goods and services than we are producing now. We would have at least 100,000 and probably 200,000 fewer unemployed. These people would be purchasing goods which are produced by Canadians. They would be paying taxes. The companies for which they would work and the companies from whom they