

S. O. 31

As defender of the charter, will the minister demand that they get what the Human Rights Commission says they are entitled to? Will she stop this economic abuse?

[Translation]

Hon. Gilles Loiseau (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member does not take her own rhetoric seriously. We had a lot of catching up to do, \$317 million worth, because the Liberals didn't do their job when they were in power. This government had to clean up the mess. Where were you all that time? We have paid \$317 million, and we will continue to pay out \$80 million annually for the sake of a cause that is vitally important: wage parity.

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[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

International Women's Day provided women across this country with very little to cheer about. Canadian women are quickly discovering that they were abandoned in the latest budget. There will never be a national day care program as long as this government continues in power. There will never be adequate help for working families. There will never be enough support for the 3.5 million women and families who live off meagre assistance programs.

Could the Prime Minister explain why the government chose this budget to abandon Canadian families?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, I want to give this House the assurance that, as a government, we never gave up our concept of a national day care program. We feel this is an important issue. In the last budget, we had to set a number of priorities, and that is why we decided to help those children, women and families who are most in need. The proposals in our last budget are an accurate reflection of the government's concern for helping needy families, including women who are single parents and children who really need help.

[English]

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister.

Two weeks ago the minister of health stated that the national day care program was being abandoned because the government wanted to help abused and hungry children. Yet for the past seven years this government has cut back on every support for these same abandoned and hungry children, including transfer payments under the Canada Assistance Plan, health care and, now in this most recent budget, family allowances.

How can the Prime Minister possibly argue that throwing out day care will in any way help the one million poor children his government already abandoned months and years ago?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, we never gave up our concept of day care. The measures we have put in place are fairer, more equitable and more generous to deal with a need we were able to substantiate as a result of our consultations and in line with recommendations contained in certain reports—the need to keep supporting women who need help.

As part of the special measures we have put in place, we are also able to provide support for day care. For instance, in the last budget the \$1,000 deduction for day care was increased to \$5,000 per child under seven and to \$3,000 for children between the ages of seven and fourteen. These measures do not provide direct funding but they do help families with young children who need assistance. And that is what we are trying to achieve by improving the economy of this country.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the official report which I have here of the finance minister shows the government last month spent \$1.1 billion in taxpayers' money to push up the value of the Canadian dollar. Now the Bank of Canada is trying to do the same thing through high interest rates, up three-quarters of a per cent in the prime rate, severely