

The Budget

I realize that it should be help for, but I know many provinces will take away the exact amount the person receives unless the federal government says to the provinces that this cannot be done. It sort of negates the whole aspect. If a woman who receives \$800 a month for two children has her child benefit increased next January and immediately in February it is taken away, all I can see benefiting is the Canada Assistance Plan because the province is not paying for it. The Canada Assistance Plan benefits as well because the federal government will not be paying for it. Where you take away the child tax deduction from every family in Canada and take away the family allowance from every eligible mother in Canada and substituted this, all in all on the ledger, you have just taken it away from one part to pay the other. Maybe the hon. member would like to comment on that.

Ms. Greene: I very much agree with the member. I do not think we should have this system that has gone on for so many years in which the provinces and the federal government play games. We need national standards that ensure the income people receive from welfare and the benefits they receive are adequate to meet their needs, that they cover the basic needs level.

Similarly, when the federal government gives someone an increase, there is no way that the provinces should be taking that money away. This is why we said very clearly in our report that the child benefit should be on top, and I think that is most important. It does require negotiations with the provinces. The minister will be meeting with the provinces. I hope that these are high priorities on his list as I think this game which has been going on has hurt poor people in Canada and has made no one really responsible. It should be stopped. We need a far more accountable system. If you have national standards and if the federal money is on top, we can say that all Canadians have an adequate level of income and that children have the discretionary income available to their families so they can participate as full members of Canadian society.

I for one want universal opportunities for—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are still a couple of questioners here.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): I listened with care to the member. I know she is very sincere and

has worked hard on the child poverty committee. I wonder about some of the implications and the kind of almost dream-like thinking that the focus of these benefits is really to try to help poor people to work. It is like saying people are on welfare because they do not want to work and certainly a small bribe of an extra child benefit is not going to do very much. I wonder how people are going to find a job. She talks about two parents working and how it might bring the family with the child benefit out of poverty. Where are the people going to get the job especially in her province of Ontario where unemployment is so high? She said it looks fairly good, 65 per cent of poverty level. For families, I am sure that does not feel very good at all.

So where are they going to get the work? Even if they find a job where are they going to get the child care programs?

This government has refused to do anything about child care and in her province of Ontario they are taking away the availability of CAP funds for child care. The dream she had that this would magically solve unemployment for people is just crazy. I ask her: Where are these people going to find jobs? How are they ever going to get child care in order to take a job, if they are lucky enough to find one?

Ms. Greene: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this question. Quite clearly in Ontario we do have a very serious problem. People cannot afford to work. If you have more than two children right now, you are better off on welfare than taking a minimum wage job.

What will happen under this program is there will be an additional incentive to work. What I would ask the provincial government in Ontario to do is to provide more subsidized day care spaces rather than higher welfare rates.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I was trying to get a couple of more questions in here. I will not be able to do it. Questions and comments are now terminated.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Luc Joncas (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank my colleague from Don Valley North for sharing her allotted time with me. The budget that we are defending now is, in my opinion, an excellent budget since it clearly follows up on what