

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the commitment of this government has not changed as a result of this budget.

In last year's budget I made it quite clear, speaking on behalf of the government, that we would bring in a child care program within this mandate. That commitment stands.

**Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North):** Madam Speaker, a litany of commitments, a litany of promises does not create a rosary of sacred trust.

The cap to the Canadian Assistance Plan will leave thousands of Canadian children without the day care that they so badly need, as most provinces have said.

In last year's budget, this government increased child tax credits to wealthy families and this year's budget breaks the backbone of the day care programs for low and middle income families.

When will this government show that it is truly committed to a national child care program and introduce this program, and not wait until our children are no longer with us?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I am not quite sure I heard the hon. member correctly. There was no increase in the child tax credit to upper income families in the last budget. We have brought in a child tax credit increase in 1988 for those families who are low income families and have children under six years of age. That is still in place. It has not been changed by last year's budget or this year's budget.

Let me underscore the comment that I made just a minute ago. This government is committed to child care. The changes in the budget this week has not changed the child care element of the Canadian Assistance Plan in seven provinces, but we are limiting our spending to a 5 per cent growth rate for the three wealthiest provinces in the country. We are saying to them, if you want to increase your spending by more than 5 per cent, we will ask you to finance that for the next couple of years because of the difficult deficit situation that we have.

**Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic):** Madam Speaker, Canadians were shocked when the Minister of Finance presented his budget on February 20 that the aboriginal people were at the top of his hit list. The minister

accused me of exaggeration when I asked about the \$100 million cut to Indian and Northern Affairs. It does not sound like an exaggeration to me. There was also a \$24 million cut in Secretary of State.

I ask the Minister of Finance whether he has eliminated the Native Communications Program and all the native newspapers? Has he cut the Northern Native Access Broadcast Program by 16 per cent? If so, how can he justify this heartless move? The native people of Canada want to know. Will he answer this directly and not be evasive?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I would refer the hon. member, if she would care to listen, to page 76 of the budget statement where it says that expenditures for Indian and Inuit programs for health, education, social assistance and comprehensive claim programs will not be constrained. Other grants and contributions in the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program will be limited to an annual—

**Ms. Blondin:** You can't touch those moneys. You wouldn't dare.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Well, Madam Speaker, if the hon. member asks a question, surely she must be interested in the answer to the question. Let me repeat.

Other grants and contributions in the Indian and Inuit Affairs program, however, will be limited to annual growth in the range of 5 per cent—

That I think is a fair request. It is part of the over-all program of controlling government spending so that we can get the deficit down, get interest rates down and have a healthier economy.

**Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic):** Madam Speaker, I have once again not received the answer to my question.

My supplementary is to the same minister. There is much dissension and uneasiness across the country among the many Canadians who support and depend on the voice of native newspapers and radio broadcast programs. It was, after all, the Micmac news that brought out the Donald Marshall case.

Why is the minister sabotaging the success of these programs? Is it an attempt to suppress the truth, the power of the word? Will he restore these funds immediately, if he is going to demonstrate the commitment of this government to aboriginal people's livelihood and rights?