

children are our most important resource. This Government remains committed to child care.

We are also acutely conscious of the needs of lower income families. For this reason we are proceeding with the tax measures affecting children which amount to \$2.3 billion, 90 per cent of which is aimed at low and modest income Canadians. Nearly one and a half million families will be helped with the cost of caring for their children.

We are also maintaining the \$100 million child care initiatives fund which provides assistance to innovative programs for child care.

Again, the \$200 million which we spent last year under CAP, Canada Assistance Plan, and the increase of a further 20 per cent in funding this year, are directed to Canadians in need, once again demonstrating our commitment both to child care and to ensuring that those least able to pay receive the most assistance from the Government.

[Translation]

The debt level is so high that we had to make a difficult decision, namely to proceed more slowly with implementation of a third measure that had been approved, which was to increase without delay the number of spaces in this country's daycare centres.

We have not reneged on our commitment to daycare, certainly not. By the end of our mandate, we will have done what is necessary to attain all our objectives in this area.

[English]

That was a commitment that was repeated today by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) on nation-wide TV.

Let me take a moment to comment specifically on today's motion by the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall). The motion states that this Budget undermines all Canadian social programs. It is difficult to understand precisely what is meant by the statement. In the time allotted for questions and comments, if the Hon. Member has the opportunity, he will clarify these claims for the House.

Supply

It would appear that the Opposition believes that targeting social programs to provide the most support to those who need the most will undermine both the concept of the program and public approval. Indeed, that was exactly the claim that was made by the Hon. Member from Winnipeg when he spoke earlier. Such an assertion is absurd. It implies that if we focus social programs on those who need them, Canadians who do not receive them will withdraw their approval.

There are at least two examples which Canadians support right now which dispute this theory. The Guaranteed Income Supplement and the child tax credit are both programs designed to help lower income Canadians. Both are supported strongly by all Canadians, not just by those who receive the cheques, and Members opposite suggest that these programs be changed to deliver equal benefits to wealthy Canadians.

I invite Members of the House, and I invite Canadians, to review the comments that were made by the Hon. Member from Winnipeg who said that if we focus benefits it is inherently unfair. What would he do with the Guaranteed Income Supplement? What would he do with the child tax credit? What is the position of the New Democratic Party when it comes to providing assistance most to those people who are most in need? That is the position, Mr. Speaker, of the Members opposite when it comes to asking those who can afford to pay to carry the higher share of the burden.

What we have is two Parties locked in the past incapable of recognizing the new realities of 1989, unwilling to be candid with Canadians about their proposals to deal with this national debt burden, prepared to continue to run up deficit after deficit, to pile the burden of debt upon young Canadians which will make it impossible for them in the future to get ahead.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: We have heard, Mr. Speaker, in Question Period and in debate in the House of Commons in the past week a great deal about compassion. We have heard about fairness. We have heard about concern. Where is the compassion opposite for young Canadians who are being asked to shoulder the debt burden which is being run up by irresponsible Governments and by politicians who refuse to accept that benefits paid must be covered in taxes?