

*Canada Child Care Act*

**Ms. Copps:** That is one of your colleagues there, he's sitting right beside you.

**Mr. Waddell:** I find that extraordinary. I am rising tonight because I really want to speak in this debate. It is a real privilege to speak in this debate. I did not miss my plane to British Columbia nor did I miss the boat or the bus.

I will have the privilege, I hope, after the next election, of representing a new riding—

**Some Hon. Members:** Which riding?

**Mr. Waddell:** A few people have asked which riding it is. It is the riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

• (2140)

**Mr. Waddell:** Just in case anyone missed it, that was Port Moody—Coquitlam. In that riding, if I might be somewhat more serious for the moment, the constituents are vitally interested in the issue of child care. The reason is that Port Moody—Coquitlam is like many new and growing areas in Canada, a suburban area with young families. Indeed, I think only 8 per cent of the people are senior citizens, a very low figure. A large percentage of the population is made up of young families with children and they have been hit hard by the Conservative Government. For example, they are paying high interest rates on their mortgages for the new houses they have bought. That is partly a result of government policy which is trying to squeeze down the boom in the Toronto area by keeping interest rates high.

These people are also paying higher taxes than they did in 1984, about \$1,000 more per family. They are also being hit in other ways. For example, they drive from the city to the suburbs and they get hit at the pump by higher gasoline prices, again enacted by the Government. As a result, this group of people really want the Government to deliver something good for a change. They have looked at child care as one thing they really need.

There is another reason I am vitally interested in child care and that has to do with equality. I fervently believe, as do my colleagues in the NDP, in the principle of equality. I think full equality of women hinges to a large extent on meeting day care needs. In our society it is still the woman who is left for the most part to look after the children. At the same time, as many Members on all sides have pointed out, women are continually moving into the work force. They have, as I see it, a double job. They are part of the work force, and then in the morning before going to work or in the evening when they come home from work they have to provide the best care they can for their children. During the day they often have inadequate child care and they worry about their children, or they cannot afford to be sick and they have to go to work sick, or they have problems when they are at work and their child is at home sick.

We do not have adequate child care in this country and I think all Parties agree with that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Order, please. There is a great debate going on and I would like to hear it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Waddell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I heard you say earlier tonight that you had been in the House for 20 years and you have not heard anything relevant. I am glad we established a precedent tonight.

**Mr. Redway:** He is hoping.

**Mr. Waddell:** The next time you will not intervene? I know, I will be careful.

I see the Minister of State for Youth (Mr. Charest) is in the House. Earlier tonight he accused me of being a centralist, an old guard socialist, I think he said. I do not apologize for that.

**Ms. Copps:** You used to be a Liberal.

**Mr. Waddell:** My colleagues say, coming from British Columbia, that I am practically a separatist.

**Ms. Copps:** That is not what Bob Nixon said.

**Mr. Waddell:** The reason he called me that was with reference to my question on Meech Lake and the question of setting objectives for social programs. That is a crucial question.

To be honest, I think the jury is still out on Meech Lake. It may be that national objectives can be set under the new Meech Lake provisions, but this Bill is the first example since Meech Lake of a major national social program and it does not attempt in any way to set out national objectives. That is the great weakness. Whether or not another government of a different political stripe, more committed to national objectives, can set them out we will have to wait and see.

I was going to quote Marjorie Nichols who wrote in *The Ottawa Citizen* today some very perceptive remarks. She said:

"The bottom line is that this bill will provide the money to build fewer child-care spaces in Canada over the next seven years than would have been built without it, based on current construction performance under existing legislation."

I think she is referring to the fact that the Bill will create fewer child care spaces than would have been created under CAP. She went on to say:

"The terrible shame of this legislation is, however, that it represents an abandonment by the federal government of its responsibility to be accountable for the collection and expenditure of other people's money."

The Minister stood up a few minutes ago and asked how the NDP can object because the Government is spending \$6.4 billion. It is tough to object to the expenditure of \$6.4 billion. You do not easily stand up and oppose a child care Bill, it has to be pretty bad, but indeed we are doing that because we believe it is irresponsible to just give \$6.4 billion to the provinces without national objectives and accountability. We in British Columbia, with Premier Bill Vander Zalm, do not know where the money is liable to go if you give it to him. It might go to Fantasy Gardens, who knows.