

LENGTH OF TOURS OF PEACEKEEPING FORCES—  
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

**Hon. John Sylvain:** By way of supplementary, when you garner the information from the Minister of Defence, will you also obtain from him information pertaining to the state of morale in the Armed Forces, given the length of extended tours and the shortened interval between tours? Specifically, what is the normal time period for an individual to be away from home on a tour of duty, and how long is it before he returns for another tour of duty?

**Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government):** He or she, as the case may be.

**Senator Sylvain:** I am sorry; I am from the old school.

**Senator Fairbairn:** I would be pleased to seek that information.

I am sure the honourable senator has met and been in touch with young people who have served in the former Yugoslavia. I have met such individuals. Peacekeeping is an incredibly stressful assignment. However, when I have asked these individuals, "Will you go back?" the answer has always been an eager "Yes."

The point of your question is well taken, senator.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL CHILD CARE STRATEGY—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Janis Johnson:** Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and pertains to child care.

Canada participated in the UN-sponsored World Summit on Social Development just last month. Our chairman at this summit, the Minister of Human Resources Development, commented with approval on the Swedish model for child care. I quote:

In Canada, there is growing poverty among single parents. In Sweden, no, and the reason is an effective system of child care.

Honourable senators, the Red Book indicates quite clearly that in each year following a year of 3 per cent or more of growth, a Liberal government will create 50,000 new child care spaces. Last year, the country met the growth requirement, and yet there was no mention of a national child care strategy in the budget. Can the leader indicate to me whether or not this promise will be met?

**Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, the Minister of Human Resources Development would put the situation of children and child poverty at the top of his list of concerns.

The honourable senator is quite right in quoting the intention in the Red Book. She also knows that the situation in this country in recent months has been such that there has been a re-evaluation of programs across the spectrum of government activity. Nevertheless, the minister remains firm in his commitment to proceed on the issue of child care as the fiscal situation permits.

Activities are proceeding on three fronts: There are ongoing negotiations and discussions with the provinces, because this area requires federal-provincial agreement; second, the government is proceeding with the component of child care that focuses on First Nations and Inuit people; third, the government is moving ahead in the areas of research and development.

Honourable senators, this answer is not one which will satisfy my honourable friend, but we are working under budget constraints. We will proceed in the child care area as broadly and as quickly as our economic situation permits.

**Senator Johnson:** By way of supplementary, can the Leader of the Government advise and enlighten us as to the progress that is being made with the provinces in this regard?

The Red Book is very clear that the federal government's portion for federal child care spaces would be \$120 million. Can the minister bring to the attention of this chamber where that money is allocated in the 1995-96 Main Estimates? Is her government serious about implementing a national child care plan?

**Senator Berntson:** Perhaps it will come from the gun registry.

**Senator Fairbairn:** I will be pleased to get as precise an explanation as I can from my colleague.

Once again, we are constrained in the amount of money available across a wide spectrum of government programs. I can assure honourable senators that the Minister of Human Resources Development will be dogged in his pursuit of the quickest and widest possible response in the area, not simply of child care but of all issues concerning members of this house and the government in the area of child and family poverty.

**Senator Johnson:** If there is light at the end of the tunnel on this issue, we cannot see any; yet so much attention was paid and commitment given to this issue during the election campaign. To date, there has been no action. I look forward to the answer from the Leader of the Government in terms of the Main Estimates for last year.

**Senator Fairbairn:** I will attempt to enlighten my friend as best I can.

AMOUNT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR CHILD CARE  
STRATEGY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate on that very point.

Less than a month ago, the Prime Minister was on a Radio-Québec program in Montreal called *Droit de parole*. He was asked a question along the same line as the question we have heard today from Senator Johnson. He responded that, yes, he was aware of the commitment and that \$300 million was available. He indicated that Mr. Axworthy — I will not say "pledged" — would discuss this matter with the provinces. He was waiting for the provinces to come on side, and the program would then be in place.

Can the leader confirm that the figure in question is not \$120 million, but that, less than a month ago, the Prime Minister indicated that the federal government has \$300 million available in the first year after the growth in the economy reached 3 per cent, which would be this year?