

Canada Child Care Act

child care expense deduction will ease the situation for middle and upper-income families.

If the \$2.4 billion to be used through the tax system, which will obviously benefit the middle and upper-income Canadian family, were used in the development of child care spaces we could develop another 170,000 child care spaces. That is the situation which I believe most Canadians would like to see in order to help the families most in need.

The legislation does provide some money for the low-income family. To help with baby-sitting the Government is going to give them an extra \$200 a year. If you have five kids and are trying to find a way to get along, \$200 a year for baby-sitting is almost a slap in the face.

However, we should not be surprised at this because it is this Government which brought in deindexing. It deindexed family allowance increases, child tax credit increases, and the child tax credit.

Mr. Kaplan: It's the opposite of Ronald Reagan.

Mr. Riis: My friend says that this is the opposite of Ronald Reagan's action. As a result of the Conservative Government's deindexation, rather than the family allowance going up with the cost of living, the costs go up but the family allowance cheque does not go up by the same amount. As a matter of fact, in 1988 \$55 million which would normally go to parents in the form of family allowance cheques will not be paid out. The federal Government will keep it for nuclear submarines or whatever else it may want to use it for. The same is true for millions and millions of dollars under the child tax credit and millions and millions of dollars under the child tax exemption.

When you add up the money which has been taken out of the hands of Canada's children by the Government this year alone, it comes to \$900 million. By 1992 that will total \$1.7 billion. Thanks to our Prime Minister, \$1.7 billion which should be going to the children of Canada is not going to them any longer. We should not be shocked that the Conservative Government does not seem to be making much of a progressive move on child care.

The country obviously needs a comprehensive child care policy which would be the first major national social program since medicare. We must approach child care as a Medicare II. At the urging of the NDP and CCF provincial Governments of the day and NDP and CCF Members of the House of Commons, Canadians took a major leap of faith and said that we should have medicare as other countries had. We finally got that and we should now be doing the same with child care in order that every young boy and girl in this country who requires child care has it available to them.

We need a comprehensive child care policy which will provide federal leadership to the provinces in order to have a uniform system across Canada so that boys and girls in Newfoundland and boys and girls in British Columbia will have the same kinds of opportunities. We need program

criteria for funding set by national objectives and national standards to accomplish this.

The Government says that we should leave it to the market-place, that if there is a need it will be filled. Well, there obviously is a need and it is not being filled. The Americans have left it to the market-place, and we know the situation in the United States. There are tens of millions of young children in the United States desperately in need of decent child care. We should look to western Europe where decent child care systems have been in place for many, many years.

To summarize, I suggest that we not leave this to the provinces to decide. The most recent study done on this by the parliamentary sub-committee on child care said that the Government should not be funding new commercial services through capital or operating grants or fee subsidies or any other means. It said that if we are interested in creating a real child care system, the time has come to use this energy within a non-profit structure. I think that should be our model.

I could and should go on much longer, Mr. Speaker, but you are indicating, unfortunately, that my time is up. The Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell), a Member of the New Democratic Party, spent her entire lifetime caring for people and developing programs to support children. She represented the New Democrats on the standing committee which examined this issue. She wrote her own report entitled "Caring for Canada's Children" in March of 1987 outlining all the details which the New Democratic Party feels ought to be considered on this issue. If you, Mr. Speaker, or others would like a copy of that report, you can certainly obtain a copy to learn what New Democrats have in mind for a comprehensive first-rate child care policy for Canada in 1988.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! The Hon. Member for Louis-Hébert (Mrs. Duplessis) has the floor for a question or comment.

Mrs. Duplessis: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), since the New Democratic Party's long term goal is to establish a network of non-profit day care centres that will be fully subsidized by the State and accessible to all.

We looked very carefully at the day-care policy announced by the NDP. The New Democratic Party would establish this network in three stages. The first stage, until 1992, would involve establishing a system of direct operating and capital grants for the provinces and territories, in order to stabilize existing services, promote the development of new services, provide for new or expanded facilities or equipment, promote services for children with special needs, and improve wages and social benefits of care-givers. Grants would be approved only for licensed non-profit day care, and operating subsidies would be structured as follows: \$8 per day for a handicapped child, \$5 a day for toddlers or children with special needs, \$4 per day for a school age child or when there is no school, and