

Petitions

● (1110)

CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN

MEASURE TO AMEND

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-326, an Act to amend the Canada Assistance Plan, (provincial costs).

Mr. Speaker: Shall the Hon. Member have leave to introduce the said Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to speak to this proposed Private Member's Bill. It is on a subject related to the Canada Assistance Plan which has been a concern of groups across the country for some time, and it concerns access to information. The purpose of this Bill is to require the provinces to provide the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) with a statement of the amounts that they contributed in providing assistance and welfare services. These amounts would then be published in the annual report laid before Parliament pursuant to the Canada Assistance Plan.

It is almost impossible to find out from provinces how much they are spending in total on welfare services which are cost shared with the federal Government. Many advocacy groups, consumer groups, social policy groups, and others have tried to do this. We know that there has been dramatic underspending of the amount that has been allocated. Certainly, the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare and the child care committee have talked about this matter. It means that with the high incidence of poverty low income families, particularly those with children, are not getting the kind of services to which they are entitled under the Canada Assistance Plan.

We would like the provinces to be required to publish what they are spending so that groups can in turn ask for the kinds of services and expenditures to which they are entitled under this Act. Of course those are cost shared by the federal Government.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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BANK ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-327, an Act to amend the Bank Act (fair banking practices).

Mr. Speaker: Shall the Hon. Member have leave to introduce the said Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, the reason I have introduced this Bill—and the Bill is entitled an Act to ensure consumer protection and financial services—is that the Canadian chartered banks have proven themselves incapable of voluntarily complying with the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. The fact that the Government accepted the banks' breast beating that they will voluntarily comply is a sham. My Bill will in fact force the banks, by legislation, to provide basic accounts with no charges for those accounts and no charges for deposits and withdrawals.

More important, this Bill will extend to small businesses across Canada all the protections which the McCrossan Bill had provided to consumers. Moreover, my Bill will also immediately impose a one-year freeze on all service charges and fines from \$25,000 to \$250,000 for any infractions.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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PETITIONS

PROPOSED CANADA CHILD CARE ACT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to present two petitions, one on behalf of a number of constituents who believe that the Child Care Act proposed by the Government contains neither national objectives nor necessary funding arrangements to ensure that families have access to high quality child care. They believe that the Act is not in the best interest of young children, women, or families in Canada.

Therefore, they are asking the Government of Canada to withdraw the Child Care Act forthwith.

CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): The second petition is on a different topic. A number of constituents are very concerned that the proposed trade deal between Canada and the United States threatens our country's sovereignty. They actually believe, and I support it, that the Government does not have a mandate even to negotiate this deal with the United States. They also believe that the result will be that it will reduce our country's ability to plan our economic, social and cultural future.

Therefore, they are asking that Parliament now ensure that a national debate takes place on this issue and that this debate results in a national general election.