

*Government Orders*

Prime Minister finally ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child after signing it well over a year ago.

What are the commitments which Canada must now live up to? The commitments that were made at that time were that the children of the world would get a first call on the resources of their respective nations and ultimately of our entire civilization; that mortality rates for children under five would be reduced by at least one third; that maternal mortality rates would be reduced by one half; that there would be access to safe drinking water and proper sewage treatment; that there would be primary education for at least 80 per cent of primary age children; that there would be a reduction of adult illiteracy by at least one half; and that children would be protected in situations of armed conflict.

The ones who immediately come to mind when I think of children who have not been protected in armed conflict are the children of Iraq. What is happening there today as a result of the armed conflict in the Middle East is absolutely tragic for those children.

Fulfilment of the commitments made at the summit would save the lives of some 50 million children world-wide. One hundred and fifty-nine nations signed this convention over a year ago and as of December 6 of this year one hundred and two were "states parties" to the convention either by ratification or accession. Canada's ratification yesterday boosted that up by one more.

Canada now joins countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Malawi, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia.

If time permitted, I probably could name all of the 102 but there are other things to talk about.

The reason I mention these countries is that most of the countries which have already signed the convention are impoverished or embroiled in violent struggle. Certainly they will face overwhelming odds to live up to the promises made in the convention. For some signatories, it will be almost impossible. Luckily for Canada living up to these commitments is not impossible.

However, it will take political will on the part of this government to ensure that appropriate and adequate

resources are channelled into eliminating child poverty here at home and abroad.

It is clear that there must be an expression of substantial public interest that these promises be kept. The hope that they represent is paramount. There is a world-wide campaign under way to ensure that all countries that have signed and ratified the convention will indeed live up to its promises. It is called the "Keeping the Promise" campaign. I had the honour earlier this week to speak about our world's children and this convention to a group of people from the city of Nepean and from all of the national capital region involved in the "Keeping the Promise" campaign.

On December 9, 1991, the Ottawa Youth Orchestra and the Ottawa Youth Choir dedicated to the children of our community and the world a concert at the Centrepointe Theatre in Nepean. These young people presented me with a petition containing 150 signatures, their signatures, all young people from the ages of 13 up, saying: "Please Mr. Mulroney, keep the promises made at the World Summit for Children".

Canada must lead. The government must ensure that it put in place its fair share of the funds necessary to keep the promises internationally. As passed in an all-party motion yesterday, our commitment amounts to 5 per cent of the cost of keeping the promises internationally. For Canada 5 per cent comes to \$350 million.

We must also set the example for the rest of the world by meeting the commitments here at home. This will be increasingly difficult if the legislation before us passes. It is the provinces and the municipalities that provide the programs to meet the needs of our children, and there are simply too many.

The children are the innocent victims of the dour economic conditions created largely by this government. Today my colleague here in the House of Commons, the member for Winnipeg North, presented to us a wonderful report called "A Child Investment Strategy". It is the Liberal minority report on child poverty. I would like to congratulate him for putting together such a very worthwhile document. This minority report calls for a child investment strategy that would have marked the begin-