

Canada Child Care Act

the House of Commons know exactly what was coming. I am surprised to see the Hon. Member did not do his homework.

I would also like to refer to the title of the legislation before the House today. The title of the Act, and I will read it, Madam Speaker, in case the Hon. Member forgot to do so: *An Act to authorize payments by Canada toward the provision of child care services, and to amend the Canada Assistance Plan in consequence thereof.*

Madam Speaker, amendments to our tax legislation concerning child care were approved by the House and the Senate and they are now in effect. We are talking here about legislation enabling the federal Government to transfer money to the provinces.

I wonder whether the Hon. Member can read, because I would refer him to Section 3. Perhaps I may read the section, Madam Speaker, because I think the Hon. Member is not aware of what Section 3 contains.

3. (1) The Minister and the Minister of Finance may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, enter into an agreement with any province to provide for the payment of contributions by Canada, subject to the provisions of this Act, toward the cost to the province and municipalities in the province.

And this is followed by the program's two components:

(a) of the provision of child care services in respect of a period beginning on April 1, 1988 or on April 1 of a subsequent year and ending on March 31, 1995 and of capital assets that were first used for the provision of child care services during that period; or

(b) of the provision of child care services in respect of any period of years beginning after March 31, 1995.

I would like to ask the Hon. Member where he got his information on the Canada Child Care Act.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, I would ask the Hon. Member to read the preamble of the Bill which says, and I will quote it in English:

[English]

AND WHEREAS for such purposes the Parliament of Canada is prepared to make payments in an amount not exceeding four billion dollars over the said seven-year period;

[Translation]

And in French:

for such purposes, it is prepared to pay up to four billion dollars over this period,

So, Madam Speaker, what is the purpose of this statement that seems to authorize agreements after March 31, 1995, if it is impossible under this Bill to spend more than the allowable sum of money, except for the seven-year period beginning with the passage of this Bill.

The Preamble is authoritative and as I see it, this preamble says the federal Government has no power to enter into agreements with the provinces after 1995.

And I conclude by saying also, Madam Speaker, that the Hon. Member said that there was no plan or legislation to help provide day care for the population before Bill C-144, but

obviously we had the Canada Assistance Plan, which created some child care spaces. I do not claim that these spaces are adequate, but it is a beginning. We also set up the commission chaired by Katie Cooke before the last elections. This was a starting point, but the Conservative Government did not use it. It just set up another Parliamentary Committee and the Government waited until the last minute, until the end of July, to table its Bill.

So the Government wasted at least two years, maybe three, by resisting these fairly recent changes that families in the country have undergone.

[English]

Mr. Nicholson (Niagara Falls): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to bring to the attention of the House that we have not been receiving any translation from French. I hope that is now corrected. I believe it is important for all Members to be able to listen to the debate in both official languages.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I thank the Hon. Member for bringing this to my attention. I am sure that the necessary arrangements will be made. I believe it is now working. As I was not using the translation myself, I was not aware. I thank the Hon. Member for bringing it to my attention.

There are two minutes left in the question and answer period.

[Translation]

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, I am sorry that there was no simultaneous translation. Perhaps I can repeat some of what I said.

[English]

I was saying that I very much doubt the value of the clause that states the Government can enter into agreements with the provinces on child care after 1995. The preamble very clearly states that this law permits the expenditure of only \$4 billion over the seven-year period ending March 31, 1995.

I also was saying that I believe the Hon. Member was incorrect in saying that before this Bill there was nothing on the books at the federal level to help create child care spaces. There was the Canada Assistance Plan. I am not suggesting that the Canada Assistance Plan has done everything that we need. In recent years there has certainly been a major change in the composition of the Canadian family. Certainly, it was a start.

Recognizing the dramatic changes in the Canadian family in recent years, as I was attempting to say in French, the previous Liberal Government created the Dr. Katie Cooke commission which reported after the election. Instead of using that report as a starting point to deal with the needs for child care, the Government threw it aside and set up a parliamentary committee that travelled around the country. It presented a report, which certainly was not publicly approved, however the