

*Oral Questions*

families to break out of the poverty cycle and enter the paid work force. He has lots of data on that. Yet the minister said he had made his choices; he had choices, he said, and he chose to be the killer of child care.

My question for the minister is this: After promising in 1984, after promising in 1988 a national child care program, and after promising as little as a year ago a national child care program, why is the government breaking its commitment to the families of Canada, to the women of Canada, to the children of Canada? Abused children, battered children need child care just as all Canadian children do.

• (1440)

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** First, Mr. Speaker, the member should say, because she knows it, that the government has put more than \$1 billion a year into the child care system in Canada.

Second, she knows, because I am sure she read the budget, that we have increased the child care deduction by \$4,000 to \$5,000 for all children from zero and seven. We have increased it by \$2,000 to \$3,000 for all children from seven to fourteen.

I believe it is a good move. I am sure that she agrees, because she is talking about abuse and violence, with the efforts we are trying to make to give those children the chance to be better nurtured, to be better helped, to be better nourished. I believe and I hope that she agrees with that.

In other words, we deal with child care with the capacity we have to do that, but we also have to deal with the children who face day after day the reality of life. I challenge my friend to say that she disagrees with that kind of policy.

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, the minister can challenge me all he likes. He is wrong.

This government talks about spending a billion dollars on child care. It also loses a billion dollars every year on the business entertainment expense allowance, which

even allows for the deduction of escort services at the expense of the children of this country.

This is the end of a universal social program, the child benefit that the minister is talking about. Today the minister has killed child care. What is next? The old age pension or medicare?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, today we have made a choice and I expressed the choice to my friend. What she has to understand first is that the social policies are there to respond to the needs of Canadians. It is for this reason we have the social policies that are in place today and announced yesterday in the budget.

The health care policies answered a question of Canadians about health care. We do that and it will not change. We do exactly the same thing with senior citizens.

Today we have decided that to answer the problems of children we should use the money that we give to the rich but, my God, the NDP has asked me not to reallocate money for those who earn \$250,000. What a miracle.

I want to give to poor families to care for their children. I hope that the saviours of the world will help me to do that.

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**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the Minister of Finance. In his budget the minister totally and completely abdicated responsibility to the unemployed.

Can the minister explain why he and his government have turned their back on the 1.5 million unemployed Canadians and the 2.5 Canadians on welfare? Can he explain to those people why he has relegated them to the trash heap?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, nobody has been relegated to the trash heap. We have created a climate of confidence, an improved climate of investment.

When we assumed office the hon. member's party left us with an unemployment rate of close to 12 per cent. It was not a crisis then.

I know that unemployment is too high. We are putting in place the fundamentals. Interest rates are down.