

Statements by Ministers

bility in this area among families, communities, the private sector and the public sector. Of particular relevance here is the role and views of provincial Governments. The provincial delivery of child care services is clearly an important consideration in the development of federal alternatives in the area of child care, a consideration which the task force will have to recognize and address. I have had discussions with my provincial counterparts and I feel that it is important that the point be stressed that the task force is looking forward to receiving ideas that will come from the public and from those members who will be charged with a difficult task keeping in mind as well the role the provinces play in this important field.

To enhance the efforts already undertaken in the child care debate, the parliamentary task force has also been requested to give consideration to the report and the studies of the ministerial task force chaired by Dr. Katie Cooke which should be reporting shortly to my colleague, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mr. McLean). Although the Cooke task force was instructed to focus on the specific issues of child care services and parental leave, its analysis is expected to provide a useful input into the work of the parliamentary task force.

To ensure that the parliamentary task force is well informed, the inquiry will have the power to retain the services of expert, professional, technical and clerical staff. The members of the task force can draw upon existing studies and reports as well as initiate further research and analysis which will assist them in fulfilling their mandate. However, one of the most important functions of the parliamentary task force will involve its ability to undertake public hearings and consultations on the issue of child care. I sincerely hope that many Canadians will participate by considering this very important social issue and informing the task force of their views.

As you may note from the terms of reference, Mr. Speaker, the task force is being asked to report to Parliament within a year. Because of the scope and complexity of this issue, I believe that this length of time will be absolutely necessary to the achievement of a comprehensive and balanced study. I fully expect that the coming year will be a very busy time for each of the members of this inquiry.

In conclusion, I would like to urge all Members of the House to support this proposal to establish a parliamentary task force on child care. I am confident that with these terms of reference, this inquiry will be able to provide valuable conclusions and recommendations regarding the future of child care.

Finally, much has been said both in the House and in public regarding the appropriate responses in modern society to support for the role of the family. We know that in many cases, families have changed from their traditional roles and traditional make-ups. It will be important for the task force to analyse the role of the traditional family as well as the changes to the traditional family in modern society.

As the family is strengthened and as the role of the family is officially recognized by the Government not only in words but in reports to the House and the Minister, I think it is absolute-

ly essential that we send to the public signals that this is happening. All of us who deal with social policy can recognize very clearly that the very best support system and the very best assurance that children will grow up to be full-fledged members of society is the maintenance of the cornerstone of society, the family. I welcome the comments of other Members of the House and hope that within a year's time, the House will benefit from their views and the future of Canada's families will be guaranteed.

[Translation]

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that at last, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) has announced the creation of a task force on child care. However, I may add it was high time the task force materialized for, as the Minister pointed out earlier, and rightly so, the task force was first announced in the Throne Speech in November 1984.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed high time, because on March 8 of this year, in answer to a query from my hon. friend from Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) about when the child care task force would be established, the Minister of State for Immigration and Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mr. McLean) said that the order and terms of reference of the task force on child care would be announced in a matter of weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I think that from now on, when we hear it will take a matter of weeks, we can assume it will take quite some time. Today, the Progressive Conservative Government has announced the creation of a task force on child care, but I may point out to the Minister of National Health and Welfare that the various parties concerned in this area are very anxious to read Katie Cooke's recommendations on the same subject.

I think it is too bad the Minister did not send us the task force's order of reference along with his speech, which would have made it easier for me to comment on the Minister's statement. I therefore intend to speak to the principles set forth in the speech we have just heard.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare defined the terms of reference of the task force in very broad terms, and that is as it should be. It is time we considered child care as an issue that concerns society as a whole, and not just the women in society. I was also pleased to hear the Minister say that the role of the family and not just the traditional family would be examined, and I wish to congratulate the Minister on this departure from the usual approach.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare also noted . . . I would like to point out to the Minister that he used sexist terms when talking about children who needed day care. He indicated that one of the issues was whether day care services would be open to children of women working outside the home, or to children of mothers working at home. Non-sexist language should have been used, Mr. Speaker! They should have