

suggestion of the hon. member that we should allow it to make our defence policy.

The fact of the matter is we buy this helicopter because it has specifications that are required for Canada. The last time I looked, Italy did not have the longest coastline in the world as we do. It does not have to conduct search and rescue operations in icing conditions and high wind conditions.

• (1440)

An hon. member: What about Hibernia?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious question. I would like to give one example of why the specifications of this helicopter are important. Icing conditions often restrict the search and rescue helicopter response in this country. On December 16, 1990, when the fishing vessel *Nadine* sank in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, CH-113 Labrador crews were delayed nine hours by weather and icing conditions. Seven people died in this tragic accident. The EH-101 could have flown in this weather.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the government makes choices and its choice is helicopters. Our choice is day care centres.

I would like to point out that Statistics Canada reported last week that two-thirds of women with a child at home under the age of six were also in the paid labour force, a growth of 20 per cent in 10 years. There has been no subsequent growth in child care spaces. The child care program is a critical addition to Canada's social infrastructure.

How can the government continue to ignore over one million children in need of a safe child care environment? Will the government do something about the desperate need for child care in this country?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question about day care centres several times before. First of all, I think it is false to claim that the government does not invest in day care centres, because over \$1 billion

annually is spent on all kinds of programs, especially in the form of tax credits allowed for day care. We also have a number of joint projects with the provinces.

We have also said this question remains a priority, in terms of the decision we made last year to provide substantial assistance for children at risk, to deal with their particular situation. The \$3 billion we invested in 1992 in this sector, to be spent over a period of five years, reflects our concern for the children of this country.

[*English*]

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the choices were between helicopters and child care spaces. I bring you back to that.

Our studies have shown that a comprehensive, non-profit, affordable and accessible child care program that will double the number of spaces would create 40,000 new jobs, improve the salaries of those who are already working in the program, put the system on a sound financial footing and put 600,000 Canadian kids in safe, affordable child care.

Why does this government continue to turn its back on Canadian kids who need child care?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, once again I repeat what I said before. Last year we put \$3 billion into child care. Of course, to do all that the member would like to do, I would need the kind of money that NDP governments normally have. But even B.C., Ontario and Saskatchewan do not have that money any more.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, recently the Minister for International Trade stated that the North American free trade legislation should be put through Parliament as soon as possible "to avoid uncertainty for business people".

Now a government spokesman has said that the legislation may be delayed at least until June or perhaps beyond when the U.S. position may have become clearer.

What has changed? Who is speaking for the government? Is the government finally conceding, as the opposition has recognized all along, that the parallel accords proposed by the new U.S. administration are