

is not fooled. He knows that today it is the retired magnate who still has a taxable income of \$50,000, but tomorrow it will be the retired secretary whose income, because of inflation, will be \$30,000. If he lives long enough, he just might see his children, no matter what their occupations, retired to the same kind of tax grab as announced on pensions last week.

The single mother in Mission—Coquitlam, indeed in any riding in Canada, is not fooled. She knows that today it is the parent whose net earnings are \$50,000 who is having her family allowance grabbed back. But in 20 years, it will be her, whose annual income is \$21,000 today, who will lose.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Langan:** Mr. Speaker, do the Hon. Members on the Government side of the House honestly believe that Canadians are fooled when they are told that the new sales tax that is coming down the pipe is going to be good for them because it is good for big business and because it is good for the Government? Do mothers really believe that paying service taxes on music lessons, haircuts and food is good for them and good for their children? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

I first got involved in politics in my union, the typographical union, and in my community in British Columbia over the issue of child care. It was 1970 and I was a single mother working shift work. The only licensed child care, if you could get it, was from 9 to 5 Monday to Friday. That was 19 years ago. That child is now 23 years old, and still there is a shortage of over a million child care spaces in this country. The Government, in its last term, introduced a child care Bill that was universally rejected as totally inadequate. The Government received input from all across the country. There was some hope that a new Minister would take the counsel of all those Canadians who deliver child care and who need child care to introduce a Bill to this House that would fill the need of Canadian families. What did that Minister do, Mr. Speaker? Did he bring in a new Bill? Did he even announce a second look? No, he chickened out.

He caved in to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). So what are Canadian children getting? Child care on hold. The Right Hon. Prime Minister's mother might think he is doing a good job, but I can tell you there are hundreds and thousands of mothers in this country who think that he and his Cabinet colleagues are letting them

### *Supply*

and their children down. Universal, accessible, affordable child care is an investment in Canadian children's future and in Canada's future. It is not a paid up Rolls Royce.

On the subject of disability pensions, increasingly in my riding and other ridings complaints have been received that applications for disability pensions are being routinely turned down, that the only way to get a disability pension is to have the determination and the knowledge to appeal. Then an applicant might have a chance. When the Estimates were tabled, I anxiously looked for an explanation. On page 6-15 of the program overview of the Health and Welfare Estimates I read:

The overall situation improved with the increase of the CPP disability benefits in January, 1987, although the increase in some cases was partly offset by the private insurance sector or by the provincial or municipal social assistance programs.

I will say they were offset. When the majority of applicants are turned down out of hand, some other government program in the provinces or at the municipal level is going to have to pick up the slack. But still believing, in my naiveté, that the people who were telling me this were mistaken, I instructed my constituency representatives to continue to assist people. I was sure that cases were being adjudicated with care and sensitivity. I was so wrong.

I had to reassess my position when my office received a complaint from a woman who had applied for a disability pension for her husband. It was denied because the man might reasonably be expected in the foreseeable future to earn a normal income. Mr. Speaker, that man was in a coma. But he might be reasonably expected in the foreseeable future to earn a normal income. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, I have had to reassess my thinking about the sensitivity of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

I asked for statistics about how many Canadians have applied for disability pensions, how many are turned down, how many have appealed and how many have won those appeals in the last fiscal year. One would think that is a relatively simple request in this age of technology and with the kinds of research that are available to Members of Parliament. But it was not a simple request. It seems the Department is having difficulty getting that information out of the computer. These were simple straightforward questions: how many applied, how many