the type of silly mythology and somewhat disparaging commentary that we heard from the Member for Calgary East.

Child care is a reality for 60 per cent of Canadian families. Let me make it very clear that, when one has direct experience, one speaks to the parents of other children, or is on the board as I am, or in my own riding where I have several day care centres, one finds out what people are talking about. It might help some Members opposite to spend a little more time talking to people who have a direct interest and involvement, which happens to be the majority of Canadian families.

Mrs. Sparrow: You bet we talk to them.

Mr. Axworthy: From what I have heard in the speeches, I do not think anybody from the Conservative caucus has talked to people whose children need day care. I listened to the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow), who attempted to explain away the lack of standards. Has that Member ever talked to a parent with a deep concern about who is looking after their child, and what type of facilities the child will be in? What is the most important responsibility is that question of one's young child, who is going to look after him or her and how, and to have the assurances that are needed that there is proper teaching, proper care, proper surveillance, proper quality toys, and proper quality health facilities.

That should not be divided town by town, region by region, and province by province. We should not have a checkerboard Canada. There should not be discrimination in the quality of services because one happens to live in a rural area versus an urban area. By practice and experience we have learned since the 1960s that the only way to ensure that there is proper quality of social services is to ensure that the federal Government takes the lead and the responsibility for that insurance and does not surrender it.

I wish to take you back four or five years, Mr. Speaker, and discuss the medicare system, perhaps the most important and useful social program in this country. What was happening back in 1983 in Alberta, Ontario, and the Atlantic provinces? Provincial governments were undermining the standard of care under the medicare system. It was only when the national government brought in the Canada Health Act to establish national standards to ensure that funding was related to quality and services were we able to correct the downward decline of the medicare system.

Mr. Halliday: There is no relation at all.

Mr. Axworthy: There is a relationship. For anyone to argue that, argues against the history of the last 60 years. This is the first major social program we have talked about where the federal Government is abdicating its responsibility to ensure that there are national equitable standards for all children regardless of where they live. Flexible experimentation I believe were the words used by the Hon. Member for Calgary South. Does the Hon. Member know what that translates into? It translates into hodge-podge, substandard care and inequality. Those are the real words that should be used. I bring that back to the living reality of the parents I see every day when I take my own child to day care, or the people in my own riding who I talked to when I visited every single day care centre. It is a very important concern because it relates to the next one. The next concern is that so many parents in Canada today are accepting that substandard care because there is no other alternative. They do not know who is looking after their child because they have to go into the private market-place to find care.

Mr. Thacker: Why is a rich man like you being subsidized?

Mr. Axworthy: I am not being subsidized. We pay our full share. What a silly, stupid, reactionary attitude from the Member for Lethbridge—Foothills (Mr. Thacker). The fact of the matter is that he is talking about 60 or 70 per cent of the parents in this country. The Tories do not recognize because of their tax policies in other areas that one has to be part of a two-income family to survive in this country today.

Mr. Thacker: It was your policy which did that. There was 22 per cent interest while you were the Government.

Mr. Axworthy: If decent and proper care is not provided for children, the economy will fall to the bottom. This is a bad program. It is not designed for the care and concern of our children. It may be designed to fit the mythology and the ideology of the Member for Calgary East. However, it has nothing to do with what is required and what people want. I will give you an example, Mr. Speaker.

• (1740)

In 1985, I sat down with the churches and social service groups in my constituency, and organized what I think is probably the most extensive family study ever undertaken in Canada. We contacted every single household in my riding to ask about family related issues. We had close to 10,000 responses in a riding where there are 45,000 households. Close to 10,000 responses. I suggest that that is probably the most singular largest study of family concerns ever undertaken in Canada at a local community level.

What did we find? In my constituency, which goes from a downtown area where there is a high predominance of single-parent families to suburban areas with middle, upper middle-class families, upwards of anywhere from 58 per cent to 75 per cent of those in the area said that the number one concern was proper, decent child care. It had nothing to do with just those on the lowest income. This kind of Florence Nightingale, *noblesse oblige* kind of attitude that we hear that somehow we are going to help those only in need flies in the face of the fact that there is 60 or 70 per cent. I will give an example. In the Fort Richmond, Waverley Heights, South Fort Garry part of my riding, an area of middle, lower-middle-class, working class families, some upper-class families, 71 per cent of the parents say that additional child care programs are needed.