

*Canada Child Care Act*

Mr. Speaker, I dare say that this is the result of the national day care strategy because we are aware again of the fact that the federal Government is determined to get involved in it.

Like a great many of my colleagues both on the Government and the Opposition sides, Mr. Speaker, I have met many mothers in my riding and most of them are definitely in favour of family type day care centres.

It is quite a chore for the mother of one, two or several children to dress them in the morning and take them to one of the public day care centres which have set such strict conditions as to the time of arrival, time of departure, etc. I can tell you that people in increasing number prefer family type day care centres because families are smaller.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has met the needs of these parents who wanted to choose their own type of care through the national strategy, and it has done so within the framework of the tax reform.

Let me remind you for instance that the maximum day care deduction for children six years of age or under will double from \$2,000 to \$4,000. Parents with children six years of age or under who have no child care receipts—and Heaven knows that there are many in our ridings who don't—will be entitled to a refundable child tax credit supplement of \$100 for 1988 and \$200 for every year there-after. That is a need we have met, Mr. Speaker!

When we hear NPD Members, Mr. Speaker, we get the impression that we are in Russia or some other socialist dictatorship, because they want to nationalize child care services.

Opposition critics say that the federal Government has to make sure that the provinces will indeed use the money we will give them under the national strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest it is an expression of lack of confidence in the legitimately elected provincial governments. I am convinced that, with respect to the Government of Quebec and the governments of the other provinces, day care centres are a basic need and I fail to see how a provincial administration would dare expend these funds for purposes other than those specified in the legislation.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it seems unrealistic to me to claim that the federal Government ought to know what Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories—the reserves, for instance—require in terms of day care centres.

I think that the social services of the provinces are much better suited and much better structured to define just what kind of day care services each province needs. It seems to me that the federal Government is showing leadership today. It has been said on many occasions but still not often enough, Mr. Speaker, if anyone is showing leadership when it comes to day care it has to be our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). There is a reason why we are here today, August 11, when we

should be on holidays: the Prime Minister has been insisting that day care legislation being so important it must be passed before we can go! It goes to show that we have a Prime Minister who knows where he is going, Mr. Speaker.

Let us be realistic about day care. I read the report of the committee so ably chaired by our colleague from Lincoln (Mr. Martin) and during the proceedings I saw for myself to what extent opinions differed in the positions expressed by women from rural or urban environment and by the various groups which appeared before the committee. I suggest that the committee was realistic in its approach when it tabled its report, an approach which should represent a consensus concerning day care services.

• (2120)

Mr. Speaker, it was very difficult for me to hear all day long, both in my office and here in the House, the comments of my opposition colleagues. I suggest that to oppose for the sake of it is wrong. Come on. Although the Government is spending \$6.4 billion on this program, they are against it because they feel it is regressive and do not meet the needs of Canadians. Mr. Speaker, I suggest it would be commendable on the part of the opposition to recognize for once that the Government has made a great step in the right direction and to work with us and the provinces in the future to improve this program.

We should emphasize the fact that the purpose of Bill C-144 is to improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of day care services as well as to make them more affordable.

I understood the Hon. Member for Outremont (Mrs. Pélipin), as official critic of the opposition, when she mentioned all these children who do not know where to go when they leave school with keys around their necks. I want to tell her this: In several areas of my Argenteuil—Papineau riding, parent committees in various school addressed this problem and, with the national strategy and the Novative Project Assistant Fund, it is possible to get money which was not available before to help schools set up day care centres to meet the needs of young teenagers after school. We are very fortunate indeed in our ridings to have block parent committees to look after these children. It is our responsibility and also the responsibility of the provinces to look into it.

I met recently my Quebec counterpart, Mr. Claude Ryan, a man whom I hold in high esteem and who is well known to the House; as Minister of Education, he is quite willing to work with his colleague, Mrs. Lavoie-Roux, the Quebec Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, to find within the framework of the national strategy which will be signed—I do not know if it has been signed already... He will do everything in his power to keep schools open after hours to offer these children shelter between the time classes ends and the time their parents get home.