

I should also like to include in my question that I agree with the Minister that we are all very much concerned that there be action as quickly as possible on the whole matter of child care. I would hope that he would endorse our position, and I think the position of the committee, that we allow for federal initiatives and that we do not have to await the approval of the provinces.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's first point dealt with the partial deindexation of family allowances. She did not place, for instance, as much emphasis on the changes to the child tax credit. There has been a fundamental difference between her position and my position on that point, and that has not changed. I say to her that as a Government we removed in part the full indexation of the family allowance and increased—and I would suggest that it was not insignificantly—the child tax credit.

Ms. Mitchell: Only for the poor.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): As I said, it was not insignificant. At least that is my interpretation. If we look at the social value of the child tax credit, I think my point remains. Additionally, we are moving forward the payment of the child tax credit so that parents will receive two payments in a given calendar year. In fact, they will receive a payment in the November-December period. That in itself is an advantage and has been endorsed.

I should like to make a third point—and I do not think the Hon. Member can deprecate it—that the best benefit for all children is a better employment picture. I do not think we should lose sight of that. If we want to look at a balanced view, I think we should look at that point additionally.

Also the Hon. Member referred to the child care task force of which she has been a member. I commend her and the other Hon. Members for the many hours they spent on their report. Obviously it would be important for me as Minister to keep my counsel until I have received the counsel of the task force before endorsing any position.

Mr. Boyer: Mr. Speaker, it is very encouraging to hear the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) give an overview appraisal of social justice and the importance of it to the Government, particularly when he referred to matters like spousal benefits, family benefits, and pension improvements for veterans. They should be put into the context of a Party with a social conscience and a Government to which social justice is a very important dimension. It is in that context particularly that I was happy to hear the Minister address the national crisis of drug addiction.

I should like to ask a specific question which has to do, at least in my view, with getting at the very root of the problem. The RCMP has estimated that the profits annually in the country from the drug trade are \$10 billion, that is, ten thousand million dollars annually in Canada. Could the Minister outline any further steps which the Government is prepared to take, not only to regulate in the way he outlined,

which I support, but to get at that profit that is certainly a big part of the cause of the drug crisis in the country?

● (1220)

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member uses a figure that I can only affirm; by all the estimates we have received the profits are in the billions. That is on the financial side. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) has announced publicly that he will be bringing in amendments to the Criminal Code, which is another part of the drug strategy that we have, relating to profits from crime. I will not outline it any further. I believe that that is within the mandate of the Minister of Justice and he should be doing that. I hope it will commend itself to all Members of the House.

There is one point, Mr. Speaker, if you just give me a moment, that is important for me to stress. I have been, as a Member of this House, not discouraged but disappointed; disappointed not because of criticism the Government might receive on issues, for instance, of a drug strategy. That is legitimate, I understand that and I have been here long enough to know that. But I have been disappointed that on the one hand our newspapers and electronic media, day in and day out, are full of the tragedies of alcohol abuse, drug abuse and the effect that abuse is having on families in our communities. On the other hand, I have been disappointed that when the Prime Minister or any of us in this House, from both sides, bring forward programs which relate to those issues they are criticized or judged only as a political response. I have more respect for Members of this House. We have our differences. We know that. But there are certain fundamentals and certain assessments in society on which we agree; specifically, when all of us leave this place we hope that through our initiatives, whether legislation, committee work or whatever, society will be better for it. I am convinced that whether it is pornography, alcohol abuse, tobacco abuse or, drug abuse, Canadians agree with parliamentarians who want to improve the state of the average Canadian, that the abuse in these areas can be reduced and that we can put forward positive models to Canadian youth rather than the cynicism I so often see.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Debate. The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would seek the unanimous consent of the House to ask further questions of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp). I know the Minister—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to tell the Hon. Member, to the Chair's knowledge unanimous consent has not been given.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order which concerns another point of order. I believe you gave the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) the floor, and I can accept that. I would remind the Chair that the motion before