

Canada Child Care Act

Then the motion goes on to say that these agreements will be available upon request to the Department of National Health and Welfare. We are not suggesting that the Department ought to go to a major expense to distribute copies of these technical agreements to people. I suppose you could make a case for that, but it would enable all sorts of groups to become more informed about just what the agreement is between the federal Government and their particular province. However, set that aside and say that it is not necessary. Then all we are saying is that if an agency, organization, advocacy group, individual, or whatever decided to find out more about the nature of the agreement signed between the federal and provincial Governments, those agreements would be available if a request were made of the Minister of National Health and Welfare or his Department. Surely to goodness there ought to be no hesitation over that. Therefore, based on that, I would like to move a subamendment, seconded by the Hon. Member for Windsor—Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy):

That the motion be amended by removing the period after the word "welfare" and adding the words:

"Or some other federal government Department or agency".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will accept the amendment.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare and his Parliamentary Secretary have indicated a concern that their Department may not be the appropriate government Department to provide that information. I think we have to respect that point of view. The Minister's officials have obviously made it clear that that would be the case. Perhaps this amendment, which is essentially a friendly amendment, would indicate that we are not concerned that it be the Department of National Health and Welfare. It could be any appropriate government Department, whatever it might be. Presumably the Minister would be in a position to determine just what that Department would be.

I emphasize again that we are talking about agreements between the federal and provincial Governments involving substantial amounts of taxpayers' money. Surely to goodness the people who are footing the Bill for these agreements and the services they provide ought to have the right to find out the details of the agreements. It is not impossible to get those agreements now. All we are saying is: let us facilitate and encourage this openness. Let us not hide or cover up. Quite frankly, let us facilitate getting this information into the hands of interested individuals or organizations.

I think the amendment provides flexibility and a variety of options from which the Minister may choose. Therefore, I think it not only meets our concern as reflected in the motion, but in a sense it also meets the concerns that the Minister brought to our attention with respect to his Department.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I think we are making some progress. I would like to ask the indulgence of the House because I could see the latter part of the amendment moved by

the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) as acceptable. My problem is, and possibly the House can come to some agreement, if Members look at subclause (3) at the top of page 4 of the amended Bill, the Government moved an amendment which was unanimously accepted. By my reading of that amended version of the Bill, it calls for the same thing as the first sentence of the motion of the Hon. Member. I will come to the second sentence in a minute.

• (1150)

It appears to me that the first sentence of the amendment moved by the Hon. Member is virtually the same as the amended version of the Bill, namely, that notice of the agreements in various forms must be gazetted, to which the committee and the Government agreed.

The second sentence of the amendment to the amendment by the NDP House Leader, namely that it could be done by the Department of Health or some other Department, takes care of the problem I have in terms of deliverability of the agreements if requested. I fully appreciate the need for publication. That is why we had the amendment in the first place.

Possibly I could get a ruling from the Table. I can accept the second part. If we accept the first part are we in fact not accepting again what we have already amended? That is my problem. Perhaps we can handle that. We must have some solution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I think we should just vote on each one. I think that would resolve the problem.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): With respect, I do not think that solves the problem. Maybe I was not clear. The amended version of the Bill and the first sentence of the amendment of the Member is, I believe, the same thing, word for word virtually. It is the second sentence which I think is at issue. I am willing to accept the second sentence as amended by the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis). I just do not know, in a technical sense, how I can accept an amendment that has already been accepted and written in the Bill. If somebody at the table can help me with that, I think we can have a solution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We can dispose of the amendment, continue to debate, and then look at it from then on with further amendment if possible.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, we certainly would have no objection to the procedure the Minister is suggesting which would be to amend his amendment which I originally presented in committee and to which he agreed, as I recall, to have this information on child care agreements between the federal Government and the provinces published in *The Canada Gazette*. Our concern was that it should be made available. It is not enough just to have notification in *The Canada Gazette*. We would be agreeable to his suggestion to amend Clause 3 by adding "or some other federal department or agency".