

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Mitchell:** The Minister's announcement today confirms our predictions and the predictions of many others that this policy to spend \$2.3 billion on tax measures rather than using it for quality child care services was ill-conceived, ignored the real need for working parents in this country, and is a misuse of child care dollars.

Will the Minister now listen to child care experts? Will he go back to the drawing board and redraft an adequate plan which guarantees affordable access to child care for the many thousands, if not millions, of children across the country whose parents are working? They desperately need this.

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to the House already, it is an adequate plan. The Member's points must be analysed. She and her Party believe that stay-at-home parents, who make that choice, should get no benefit from a child care package. The Government believes that they should get some benefits from a child care package.

Additionally, the NDP is against parents who have decided not to access the formal child care system but have made the personal choice to access a system which they feel is valid for them. In order that they are able to have the same deductions for child care expenses, the \$2.3 billion package has been put in place.

Obviously NDP Members are against it. They want everything driven by government and do not want parents to have a choice.

**Ms. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Minister has asked any mothers who are homemakers whether \$200 a year is giving them a choice. I hardly think so.

## REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET PROVINCIAL COUNTERPARTS

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister has pretty well admitted that the additional \$1 billion for child care only corrects the Government's miscalculations. This is a badly conceived plan altogether. It provides for only a very small percentage of the badly needed spaces.

Since the Minister has not yet tabled legislation will he agree to meet with provincial and territorial Ministers, take a new look at this plan, and draft a plan which meets the real child care needs of kids and working parents across the country?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I have consulted with the provinces as recently as this morning. This is a good plan. In terms of the extra \$1 billion she should remember that when the provincial and federal Governments looked at the cost per space they saw a need to raise both the subsidies per space for families as well as the abominably low salaries of people working in day care, the average being, as I said, about \$8,900.

Those were the kinds of calculations we made with regard to the \$1 billion. I hope the Member will support at least that if nothing else.

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## CANADA POST CORPORATION

SYDNEY, N.S., MAIN POST OFFICE

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. I have here an internal document from Canada Post which—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** Did they deliver it?

**Mr. Gagliano:** Don't laugh, it's a serious matter.

**Mr. Gauthier:** The Tories are all laughing.

**Mr. MacLellan:** Mr. Speaker, I want it noted that the Conservatives find what I am going to say very funny.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** No, we'll be the judge of that.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Hon. Member.

**Mr. MacLellan:** Mr. Speaker, the document states that Canada Post is going to be closing the main post office in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

**Some Hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Boudria:** Hardly a laughing matter.

**Mr. MacLellan:** A post office which serves 22,000 people is going to be replaced by a privatized counter-type service. It is an outrage that the Government would act so arbitrarily and without any consultation with the community.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister use his authority to tell Canada Post to abandon all plans to close the Sydney post office?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, in 1981, it was the Liberal Government at the time that, with the consent of all three parties in this House, wanted to create a Crown corporation to avoid political interference.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the post office to which the Hon. Member is referring has not been closed. It has been transferred to the private sector, and service has been increased. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that when residents are asked their