

Science and Technology just very recently released a report on this whole question of child poverty.

I am not going to read all the recommendations, but I am going to indicate three of them because I think these recommendations are very relevant to the subject matter at hand.

First, the committee recommended that the federal government fully support the objective of substantially reducing child poverty in Canada. Toward that objective, the committee recommended that the federal government show leadership by undertaking co-operative strategies with other levels of government and the public at large to address the needs of Canada's children living in poverty.

This is the first recommendation.

The second recommendation is for a national conference involving all levels of the federal government on the subject of shared solutions to the problem of child poverty in Canada to be held within the next 12 months. This is important and timely.

Another recommendation is that the federal government in collaboration with the provincial and territorial governments set out a policy, as quickly as possible, on national child care outlining a range of child care options.

There are in excess of 16 different recommendations that came out of this report on the question of child poverty.

Why did we pick child poverty? It is a timely subject especially in light of the fact that Canada endorsed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is an excellent step in the right direction toward solving the question of poverty once and for all in Canada.

At the same time, because this debate is taking place during Christmastime, I wanted to focus on the question of child poverty as it relates to the city I represent. While many of my colleagues think we live in a fat city, in fact, as in anywhere else in Canada, we also have child poverty here. One out of every four children in the city of Ottawa lives in poverty. Ottawa is one of the largest cities in Canada.

When you look at the poverty rate for families with children in our region, it is almost double the rate of families without children. In this region alone over 12

per cent of families with children are poor in comparison with 6 per cent of families without children. It is almost double. Translated into numbers, there are almost 13,165 poor families with children.

Poverty hits children the hardest. When you look at children in schools, you will find that one out of six in this region under the age of five are poor. Almost 55 per cent of families with children are poor when the household maintainers are under 25 years old. The younger those family maintainers are, the greater the chances of them being poor. This is especially so when it comes to single parent families.

We have approximately 10,500 children living in 6,000 poor two parent families in this region. This is a serious problem facing not only our city but also has a tremendous impact on the schools that are trying to provide them with the education they need.

According to the latest statistics, almost 50 per cent, or 5,930 poor families with children have a household maintainer who has not completed high school. About 50 per cent of the poor families in this region, whether they are men or women, have not completed high school. This is twice the national rate across Canada when we talk about a dropout rate of 30 per cent.

When you look at the number of households where there are those who have post-secondary education, we have only 11 per cent in our region. That is only 1,200 families. It gets even worse when you look at the poor families where one of the household maintainers or supporters has a university degree. It is a very small percentage of people. It is only about 3 per cent or 935 families.

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That is the kind of situation we are dealing with when it comes to poverty, especially in our inner cities.

Many of my colleagues might suggest that the reason we have poor families is because poor families have too many children. You would be surprised to learn that the majority of poor families, or approximately 78 per cent in our region, have one or two children at the most.

Also some people think that just finding a job is the answer to poverty. In fact, according to the Social Planning Council and its report on child poverty in our region of Ottawa—Carleton, many of the people who