

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

FUNDING OF DAYCARE SERVICES

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Affordable daycare is essential if women are to have equal access to training and jobs, yet the Minister has refused to include daycare services for job-creation programs. Will he reconsider this decision and now give priority to funding daycare jobs as an essential component in government job creation? Will he also extend training grants to include child care costs?

● (1440)

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do indeed believe strongly that it is important to provide daycare facilities. Indeed, when I was Minister of the Environment we established in Environment Canada, I believe, the first daycare centre in a government installation which existed within the Government of Canada. I do believe strongly in doing this. It is a subject which I hope we may be able to deal with effectively in the context and in the use of Section 38 funds, in co-operation with the voluntary sector, as we outlined we wanted to do in the Speech from the Throne. We are carrying on discussions with the voluntary sector on how we might make that approach to funding a feasible and desirable one to follow.

Ms. Mitchell: That is not what you were asked.

Mr. Roberts: I hope that within that context we will be able to meet the kinds of concerns expressed by the Hon. Member.

Ms. Mitchell: The Minister did not answer the question, Mr. Speaker, so I will ask my supplementary question of the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

RECOMMENDATION MADE BY NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, daycare is available only to the rich who can pay, and to the poor who qualify under the Canada Assistance Plan. Will the Minister now take federal initiatives, as recommended by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, to help fund daycare on a nonrestrictive and universal basis so that it is not restricted just to people on welfare? Will the Minister also introduce a new method of shared funding with direct federal grants for licensed spaces, as has been recommended?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will always do everything to support daycare, as will this Government. That black and white simple image of the poor and the rich is a bit simplistic. The Hon. Member knows that we have literally stretched the guidelines to the maximum and we are providing \$70 million this year to

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the Provinces for daycare, which is, of course, for those in need and most likely to be in need.

However, the Hon. Member is forgetting all the tax avenues which we have offered to Canadian families—mothers in most of the cases—also to take advantage of the various services for their children. It remains that daycare is basically provincial, and if the Provinces do not want to move on this, we will exercise the maximum leadership we can. For example, my colleague, the minister responsible for the status of women, as part of her next agenda for the federal-provincial conference of her own counterparts, will try to speed up the development of provincial daycare services.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM MEXICO

Mr. Speaker: May I call the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of a delegation from Mexico led by Senator Celso Humberto Delgado Ramirez.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NATIONAL REVENUE

PROVISION OF INFORMATION BY OFFICIALS TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Can the Minister tell the House if he has, in fact, issued instructions to his officials that they are not to give information to Members of Parliament other than what they can obtain under the Access to Information Act? Has he given that directive to his officials because, if he has, that flies in the face of every parliamentary convention and tradition which give us the responsibility to hold the Government accountable?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): No, Mr. Speaker, I did not give such instructions, and I believe the Hon. Member's question is based on an erroneous interpretation by his colleague of a reply I gave here in the House. The House will recall that last week, the Hon. Member's colleague asked me a question about a guideline I gave my officials with respect to—

An Hon. Member: He is not interested in the answer either!

Mr. Bussières: Mr. Speaker, do you see why they always repeat the same question, and why those questions misrepresent the facts? They do not even have the common decency to listen to the answer, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: He does not understand!