

*Private Members' Business*

single moms and those single moms who earn only two-thirds of the wages earned by men.

In my call for a national child abuse strategy which includes a child protection commission, I want to draw attention to the deplorable situation that exists in Canada with regard to child abuse. It is appropriate to know that September has been designated Child Abuse Prevention Month. Daily we hear horror story after horror story about child abuse in this country, particularly about child sexual abuse. The Metro Toronto Catholic Children's Aid Society reported last month that the number of child sexual abuse cases has risen by 59 per cent this year.

As recently as June 20 the government, through the Minister of National Health and Welfare, rejected criticism that this government is not moving fast enough to counter the growing problem of child sex abuse. The minister said that there is no cure to protect children from sexual predators. The minister indicated that the government has acted on the majority of recommendations contained in the 1984 report of the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youths. There were 52 recommendations in the report and I would be interested to have the minister report to the House which of the 52 recommendations have been implemented.

We do know that recommendation one, which calls for the office of a commissioner, has not been implemented.

The report puts it very clearly: "The problem of child sexual abuse in Canada is so pervasive and deep rooted that in its response to our recommendations we believe that the Government of Canada must establish a means to deal adequately and on a co-ordinated basis with these issues.

The problems identified and documented in the report are so far reaching and complex that they extend well beyond the jurisdictional authority of one or two federal departments or one level of government alone. In relation to several significant issues pertaining to sexual offences, the committee found that many of the well founded recommendations of earlier distinguished advisory commissions had never been implemented."

What is required to bring about the reforms that are needed is an administrative mechanism which co-ordinates the efforts of federal, provincial and municipal governments. In our judgment it is unlikely that this

work can be achieved within the existing organization of public service.

I agree with the call for a commissioner. The report suggests that the commissioner should report directly to the office of the Prime Minister and that the commissioner should initiate and co-ordinate the work of various federal departments, work in conjunction with related departments at the provincial level, and establish the means needed to assure the full participation of non-governmental agencies in these activities.

Our governments in the past have, when special need has been recognized, established special bodies which were assigned special responsibility to respond. That surely is needed now. The problem of sexual abuse in Canada is so pervasive and deep rooted that the only way to begin to address the problem, much less the consequences, is with a commissioner. It is time to recognize that these problems are real and to address them.

On the matter of the reference in the motion to an emergency hot line which children can contact in times of crisis, let me refer the hon. members to the Kids Hot Line.

It is a national bilingual telephone counselling and referral service that has been operating for just four months. It was launched by the Canadian Children's Foundation, a national non-profit fund-raising organization concerned with the health and welfare of children. It has handled over 30,000 calls in just over four months, averaging 650 per day from children across the country, including the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Four hundred of these calls have been suicide calls. The callers range from four years old to 19.

Preliminary statistics show that 10 per cent of the callers were francophone; 48 per cent of the calls concerned interpersonal problems, family and parental conflict, peer relationships, isolated and lonely children, those with non positive relationships in their lives and kids in rural and remote areas. Twelve per cent of the callers are abused. For many it is the first time they have talked about their abuse. The majority of these cases are serious in nature. Counselling and referral to community organizations is imperative in these cases. Five per cent are related to alcohol and drug abuse. Other issues