

Canada Child Care Act

Ms. Mitchell: Thank you very much. I do appreciate it. Regarding Motion No. 21 which calls for amendments to the Act to ask the province to indicate the means by which it will encourage the development of child care spaces in the workplace, as my hon. colleague from Kamloops—Shuswap said earlier, we believe that because of the nature of this Act, with the very limited funding, it is necessary to be more specific about the kinds of child care that are available.

Later, Mr. Speaker, you will hopefully hear our amendment about objectives, where we talk about a child care program that must be comprehensive. To be comprehensive, that means that working parents who have children under three years old, infants and toddlers, should have good quality, licenced care available. Similarly, if the children are over five, in kindergarten and in elementary school, they also should have child care available. As it is now there is not really enough child care for three-year olds to five-year olds, although it seems to be a little more available with limited hours. We feel that to work for a comprehensive child care program we must have a wider range of ages included. I am referring here specifically to Motion No. 22.

• (1240)

I have asked my colleague to consider an amendment to the motion which would include infant care and toddler care as well. I agree with the Hon. Member for Outremont that there is great concern not so much with the wording but with the method of funding, which is very limited, as is the number of new subsidized spaces to be created. We think that many provinces will use the available funds only to subsidize what they already have in place. If that is done then there would be little flexibility to create the new types of services which are very much needed. It is a good idea to make this specific in the Bill.

Returning to Motion No. 21, I would like to say again that we in this Party have always supported workplace child care. We feel that any child care program should adapt to the sites where it is necessary for parents to have care as part of being accessible to their workplace. I recall that when the special committee on child care held hearings there were workers from Nova Scotia, I believe, who appeared before the committee. They were workers in fish plants. During the very brief season when husbands often went out in the fish boats, the mother and all other adult members of the family were working in the fish plants. They were working night and day and there really was not very much in the way of space at all. We need flexibility in hours, but we also need accessibility to the work site. I am not sure that a fish plant is an ideal place for a child care centre anyway. However, there are many other places where this would be very suited, particularly in federal buildings.

We also support Motion No. 21. As you will see later, Mr. Speaker, we have referred to these matters in our over-all objectives when we considered comprehensive child care. The Minister should have written objectives in. Even if provinces

cannot afford to do everything all at once, at least we should have the goal of comprehensive child care.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the suggestions proposed by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell). Any of us who live in and represent urban constituencies have some idea of the tremendous increase in the number of married women, with very young children, who are working. To a larger extent they are working because in this day and age, particularly in cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, and to a lesser extent in my City of Winnipeg, it is necessary for both husband and wife to work if they are to be able to meet their monthly mortgage payments. Thus mothers with quite young children of a year old and sometimes even less than a year old are finding it necessary to work. They need a system of child care which will assure them that their very young children are able to be placed in a child care facility which will give them the kind of care they need.

Therefore I move the following amendment:

That Bill C-144 be amended in Clause 4 by adding immediately after line 38 at page 4:

“indicate the means by which the provinces will encourage the development of child care spaces to meet the needs of infants and toddlers under three years of age”.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We have just looked at the motion. It is not in the proper form. I would appreciate having more time in order for the Table to consult with the Hon. Member so that it can be put in the proper form.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, that is agreeable to us. I wonder if, while Your Honour is considering that, the House could move back to Motion No. 15 at this time in order to clarify it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is agreed that this grouping will stand and we will go back to Motion No. 15.

Motions Nos. 18, 21 and 22 stood.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, as you know, earlier we tried to present Motion No. 15 and a subamendment to it. I would now ask the permission of the House to withdraw Motion No. 15 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) and the subamendment standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) and replacing it with a new motion, seconded by the Hon. Member for Vancouver East:

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-144 be amended in Clause 3 by adding immediately after line 6 at page 4 the following:

“The agreements will be available upon request from the Department of National Health and Welfare or some other federal government department or agency.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Motion No. 15 has been withdrawn, by unanimous consent.

Motion No. 15 (Ms. Mitchell) withdrawn.