

*Canada Child Care Act*

they at least consulted with the Hon. Member for Outremont (Mrs. Pépin) who was one of those sitting on the legislative committee this summer? I am convinced that my colleague from Outremont could have told them a few things, including the date of the Bill's first reading in the House. But I would particularly like to emphasize certain aspects of this issue. I am thinking of a change suggested by the Hon. Member for Outremont during the legislative committee to clarify whether the 200 000 extra spaces were meant as a minimum or a maximum. At her request, the two little words "at least" were added before the number 200 000 in the preamble. Not only is this what we wanted but it is in fact something which we have added to the Bill at his request to make sure that Members opposite understood that it was certainly not a maximum but rather a minimum.

There were also other changes made, Madam Speaker, at the committee stage, which were totally ignored by the leader of the official Opposition this morning. I would like to stress among others the issue of children. What is a child? He spoke to us about a child under six. Section 2 of the Bill, a definitional section, describes a child as a person under 15 of age. So there is no problem and this is something everyone can understand; according to the child care legislation, a child is under 15. That seems simple enough. It is there in the legislation. The issue of rolling over expenses from one year to the next was also raised, Madam Speaker. Yes, there was a change in committee in that case as well to ensure that part of the monies not spent as forecasted by the provinces could be rolled over to the subsequent year.

Yes, that is a change which was made in the legislative committee.

Madam Speaker, there was also an amendment dealing with linguistic minorities. There was an amendment moved by the Hon. Member for Outremont which was accepted. There was another amendment dealing with the needs of low income families which was added to the legislation.

I suggest that we have carried out a fair examination of the issue, that we have listened to the legitimate representations, even from the Opposition, and we have been able to incorporate them in the legislation, so that I feel we have an excellent Bill, Madam Speaker.

I should like to emphasize something which I noticed this morning, Madam Speaker. As I was listening to the Leader of the Official Opposition, I was absolutely flabbergasted to realize that not a single woman supported what he was saying. Having heard what he had to say, I suggest I would have done the same thing and I feel that on an issue as important as this one for the women, families and children in Canada, we have to thoroughly examine the Bill before us.

Madam Speaker, last Wednesday, the Leader of the NDP made a number of statements in the House. I had the opportunity to read them and I should like to address especially his comments dealing with issues of national objectives and

standards, as well as the availability of Federal funds for daycare services under this legislation.

As a result of this debate, I have come to the realization that several Members of the Opposition sitting in the House know nothing about the sharing of powers between the Federal and Provincial Governments in Canada, nor about the Federal assistance made available through Federal programs in such areas of Provincial jurisdiction as health services, post-secondary education, social assistance and services. They do not seem to understand the difference between cost sharing programs under which the Federal Government reimburse the provinces part of the expenses incurred under Federally sponsored programs and global financing, and where the Federal Government's contribution is determined by a formula and is not directly tied to Provincial expenditures.

In an unfair attack against the Premier and the Government of his province, the NDP House Leader said this last Wednesday: "The Government of Canada gives British Columbia money for post-secondary education . . . The British Columbia Government does not match any of it. It does not spend any money on post-secondary education, and I am saying it will do the same for child care."

Madam Speaker, this is a cost sharing Bill. Any province seeking federal funding under the provisions of this legislation will first have to contribute money to increase the number of spaces in its qualified child care centres and provide regular financial assistance with respect to new and existing spaces by paying direct grants or subsidizing the expenses of low and middle income families. The provinces must contribute money for child care and spend that money for nothing else before we will pay back some of these expenditures. It is not a matter of payments which must be matched by the provinces. They must contribute first and then apply to the federal Government for partial repayment of their expenses.

By contrast, federal contributions for post-secondary education are figured out every year on the basis of a formula which has nothing to do with provincial expenditures. The provinces are not expected to match the federal contribution nor to add a preset amount.

Madam Speaker, allow me to say a few words about the issue of national standards and objectives. Apparently a number of Opposition Members believe that there are national standards concerning new programs and that these standards are the same in all sectors where the federal Government contributes money. Since the federal Government shares the cost connected with social assistance, the Members in question assume that social welfare rates are the same in each province. Since a federal contribution is paid for insured health services, these Members assume that the number of doctors per capita in New Brunswick is the same as in Ontario and that since there are hospitals in Toronto, there should be hospitals in every little fishing village in Newfoundland. Since the federal Government provides funding for post-secondary education, these Members assume that the professor/student ratio at