RHETORIC AND REALITY

RHETORIC AND REALITY:

THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE ON CHILD CARE IN CANADA,

1970 - 2000

by

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Abstract

Canadians and their politicians have been talking about child care for many years. What has been said and what has been accomplished are very different. This thesis discusses the way politicians have spoken of and dealt with the demands of child care advocates for nationally funded and regulated child care of high quality and universal accessibility. The author argues that neither of the two ruling federal political parties, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, have ever intended, despite their party platform promises and leaders' claims, to deliver a national child care program. The thesis follows the political rhetoric surrounding the issue from the delivery of the Report the Royal Commission on the Status of Women to the end of the 2000 election and deals specifically with the political dialogue of the 1984, 1993, and 2000 elections.

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Rhetoric or Reality: the Political Dialogue on Child Care in Canada, 1970-2000

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) released its report in September of 1970, after more than three and a half years of deliberation. The Royal Commission was established by the Pierre Trudeau Liberal government to determine what the federal government needed to do to ensure equality of opportunities for both sexes. Among its many recommendations was the following:

> that the federal government immediately take steps to enter into agreements with the provinces leading to the adoption of a national Day-Care Act under which federal funds would be made available on a cost-sharing basis for the building and running of day-care centres meeting specified minimum standards...[1]

The 1984 federal election was considered a landmark election for child care advocates because, in a televised leaders' debate sponsored by the National Action Committee (NAC) on the Status of Women, "viewers ...were privy to an astonishing event: the leaders of all three political parties declared their support for childcare."[2] Brian Mulroney led his Progressive Conservative Party (PC) of Canada to victory with the largest number of the seats in parliament of any government in Canadian history

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[1]Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada.. Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967, p. 271.

[2]Prentice, Susan. "The 'Mainstreaming" of Daycare," Resources for Feminist Research, V. 17 (1988), no. 3, p.59.

(PCs 211, Liberals 40, New Democrats 30). This meant that the Conservatives should have had an easy time moving legislation through parliament.

The Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (Abella), released in October 1984, asserted that "child care is not a luxury but a necessity" and then made this recommendation among its many:

> A National Childcare Act should be enacted, based on consultation with the provinces, territories, and interest groups, to guarantee consistent national standards.[3]

The 1986 Report of the Task Force on Child Care's (Cooke) second recommendation was:

> that the federal government initiate the development of a nation-wide system of child care in Canada, by declaring its willingness to share a substantial portion of the cost of such a system, and initiating a new federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangement for child care.[4]

The newly elected Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney appointed the Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care (Martin). It recommended that

> the federal government introduce a Family and Child Care Act, complementing the Canada Assistance Plan, to provide federal funds to licensed child care centres, family day care homes, and family support services[5]

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[3]Royal Commission on Equality in Employment. Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment. Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1984, p. 192 and 267.

[4]Status of Women Canada. Report of the Task Force on Child Care. Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1984, p. 373.

[5]Special Committee on Child Care. Sharing the Responsibility: Report of the Special Committee on Child Care. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1987, p. 87.

The Tories introduced into the Canadian parliament, in 1988, a bill to create the Canada Child Care Act. Although the bill passed through the House of Commons, it failed to pass through the Senate before the Conservatives called a federal election in the fall of that year and, thus, the bill died on the order paper.

The 1993 election saw the Jean Chrétien Liberals win a majority government in a federal campaign based on the famous *Red Book.* In it the Liberals promised:

> A Liberal government, if it can obtain the agreement of the provinces, will be committed to expanding existing child care in Canada by 50,000 new quality child care spaces in each year that follows a year of 3 percent economic growth, up to a total of 150,000 new spaces.
>
> We will propose to continue an equal funding arrangement with the provinces: the federal government will assume 40 percent of the costs, with matching funding of 40 percent from provincial governments. Parental fees, determined by a sliding scale based on income, will provide the remaining 20 percent.[6]

Chrétien's majority was not quite as large as Mulroney's - only 60% (177) of the 295 seats - but it was still substantial enough to easily carry a piece of legislation.

In 1995, the Liberal government ended focussed funding for specific social programs by replacing the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) and the Established Program Funding with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). This meant provinces were free to spend the funds previously designated for child care spaces however they wished. The federal government was no longer going to directly fund new spaces nor continue the cost-sharing.

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[6]Liberal Party of Canada. Creating Opportunity - the Liberal Plan for Canada. Ottawa: 1993, p. 40.

The 2000 federal election was a campaign short on issues and long on name calling and fear mongering. Even in the televised debate of national party representatives, sponsored by NAC, the issue of child care was hardly mentioned. Only the New Democrats and Bloc Québécois specifically mentioned child care and funding for it in their platform documents. The Liberals lumped it in with other services for parents and children under the umbrella program, Early Childhood Development Initiative, which was allocated $2.2 billion over five years. The NDP promised $3.5 billion a year by 2004. The issue was virtually ignored by the media and party leaders alike.

This thesis will explore the political dialogue surrounding the issue of child care over the thirty-year period of 1970-2000 by focussing on three federal elections (1984, 1993, and 2000). Sources for the rhetoric of the debate will be the Party platforms, leaders' debates and two forms of popular media, The Globe and Mail, and Maclean's Magazine, as well as the CBC Election 2000 web page. It will discuss what the parties and their leaders were saying and what the popular media was communicating to Canadians. The central argument of this thesis is that child care as defined by child care advocates was never what was intended by the two main federal political parties. Despite what the parties said, and what the child care advocates believed them to be saying, time has proven that the Liberals and Conservatives did not believe in, nor intend to deliver, a good quality, universal, publicly funded and regulated national child care program. While the political rhetoric on child care has continued to evolve, the

reality has stagnated. Politicians continue to refer to the importance of childcare, but they no longer promise a national program.

It is the rhetoric of the politicians and the media as interpreters of that message that make most Canadians decide how to vote. Political spin doctors and the media dictate which issues dominate. In 1984, Canadian public opinion polls revealed to politicians that women were becoming a political force with distinct voting patterns and preferences.[7] It was expedient for political parties to court women voters, leading women's issues to have a new significance in the planning process of parties' election campaigns.

Despite their desire to appeal to women voters, an examination of the language and behaviour of the Liberals and Conservatives reveals how ill at ease they were, even at the best of times, with the issue of child care and how unprepared they were to institute a national child care program. While the 1984 election seemed to represent a high point for child care advocates, the major parties were never truly serious about so called "women's issues" let alone the idea of an expensive and politically difficult issue like publicly funded child care. The legislation initiated by the Mulroney government clearly demonstrates that the government's understanding of what was needed was very different from the aims of the child care movement.

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[7]The number of women elected to the new parliament almost doubled in 1984. (Gotell and Brodie, p. 55.)

After the release of the Report of the RCSW, advocates of child care began promoting a vision of a national program based on the principles of universal accessibility, public funding, high quality, and governmental regulation for all preschool children. They argued that child care had the ability to promote gender equity and child development while at the same time alleviating poverty. Universally accessible and publicly funded child care could promote gender equity by enabling women the freedom of earning an income without the expense or worry of child care.[8] By freeing families of the substantial expense of child care, the state could take a step toward poverty reduction, not simply by removing the cost but also by enabling women who choose to work outside the home and to have a career with fewer disruptions. This would also alleviate poverty among retired women because they would have many more years of contributions to state and work related pensions.

Advocates asserted that child development could be improved through high quality child care programs where trained caregivers provide educational programs, as well as care, to all children. This would be especially beneficial to children who come

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[8] The cost of child care "can more than double the annual cost of raising younger children and is usually the greatest single child-related expense a family incurs." In urban centres in Central Canada, the cost of child care can be between $600 and $900/month for a preschooler. In small towns in Rural Canada, there are fewer child care centres and prices are generally lower.

Child care costs, averaging $16,000 per year for a family with two small children, impose serious hardship on low income families. It is almost $2,000 more than a person working a 40 hour week at minimum wage (Ontario $6.85/hour, 2000 figures) earns in a year. The lowest level employees in child care facilities, based on a national average, earn approximately $1,534 per month ($18,408 per year). Directors earned an average of $2,952 per month ($35,424 per year). This is assuming a 40-hour week. "Salary levels for some teaching staff positions in some provinces were at or below the Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off." The Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-off for a single person in an urban area in 1998 was $17,409. This may mean that child care workers cannot afford to place their own children in licensed centres.

from economically, socially and/or culturally deprived homes. Good quality, regulated child care with an adequate ratio of caregivers to children, they argued, can also ameliorate the lives of children living in abusive or neglectful homes. Removing children from the home for several hours each day, for example, means that the children are being observed daily so that their physical and mental well-being is monitored and abuse or neglect would be more likely to be detected. Child care advocates asserted that a good start in life could lower the future costs to society of health care, lost work time, criminality, and law enforcement by improving the education and training preparedness of children.[9]

The fundamental issue behind the child care debate is one of social reproduction. According to Humphries and Rubery, "[s]ocial reproduction is the daily and intergenerational renewal of human resources, physically and mentally capable of participation in production - not all family activity is social reproduction and not all social reproduction takes place within the family."[10] Caring for and raising, teaching and, more generally preparing children to become the next generation of workers is a necessary function of any society. Whose responsibility is it to bear and care for children? Is it the responsibility of families alone or does it fall to the local community,

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[9]Cleveland, Gordon and Michael Krashinsky. The Benefits and Costs of Good Child Care: The Economic Rationale for Public Investment in Young Children- A Policy Study. Toronto : Childcare Resource & Research Unit, University of Toronto, 1998.

[10]Humphries, Jane and Jill Rubery. "The Reconstitution of the Supply Side of the Labour Market: the Relative Autonomy of Social Reproduction," Cambridge Journal of Economics, 1984,8, p. 331.

the whole of society, the state, and/or the church? Depending on the nature of the social welfare state, this responsibility is allocated very differently.

In Gosta Esping-Andersen's widely recognized typology of welfare states, Canada has been categorized as a liberal, residualist state.[11] This type of state is characterized by social policies that leave most members of society to depend on the market and the family for services that contribute to social reproduction. These states provide stigmatized welfare relief for the most needy. While Canada fits better in the liberal category than either of the other two, the conservative or the social democratic regime types, it is a country with some anomalous programs and political preoccupations. Medicare is the most conspicuous example of a program that disrupts Canada's fit within the liberal state category. It is an "unconditional social right" which Esping-Andersen suggests the liberal regimes were quite successfully able to avoid. Eligibility resides in residency not need. But Canada is also anomalous because of the recognized position held by its social democratic party, the New Democrats, on the federal political stage. Until 1993, the NDP was considered to be one of the three mainstream political parties and, despite small numbers of its members in Parliament, its leader was always included in the leaders debates. While everyone accepted it as part of the political landscape, virtually no one expected the party to form the government.

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[11]Esping-Andersen, Gosta. The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 27.

The party has influenced the political agenda by symbolising the threat of the left and, thereby, pressuring the governments to adopt some of the party's programs.

Medicare was not the only classically non-liberal program among Canada's social welfare initiatives. Esping-Anderson adds that "Canada has a blend of a people's pension (old age pension) and social insurance,"[12] which are atypical of liberal regimes. Parents are guaranteed leaves and unemployment benefits following the birth of their children. A universal guaranteed annual income has also received considerable political debate and is a reality for Canada's seniors, though at a very modest level. On the other hand, Canada also has means tested poor relief and retired Canadians are heavily dependent on work related pensions in old age, programs typical of liberal regimes.

O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver also argue that Canada is unique among liberal states because of the states historical role in "funding of advocacy groups and the emphasis on citizenship development."[13] This meant that groups working toward women's equality and child care received support from the federal government for their work which enabled them to become stronger and act more effectively than similar unfunded groups in other liberal democracies. This was especially well illustrated by the difficult times upon which these organizations fell when their funding was reduced or

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[12]Esping-Andersen, p. 49.

[13]O'Connor, Julia, Ann Shola Orloff and Sheila Shaver. States, Markets Families: Gender, Liberalism and Social Policy in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the United States. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 209.

eliminated in the era of spending cuts and deficit reduction of the 1980s and '90s. As funding for organizations such as the National Action Committee (NAC) declined, their ability to influence policy was also diminished.

Social democrats would argue that the care of children is the responsibility of the whole of society, with the state playing a leading role in the form and structure of care, education and rules of intervention in family life. Social conservatives believe that the family and the church are the primary sites of care but that the role played by the state is as a back up to the church and family. The state intervenes to preserve the society as it is and to prevent the disruption that would be caused by extreme changes. The state then would help parents (usually women) to stay at home with children or would provide care for those in need, in order to encourage families to produce children. Those states which would fall under the label of liberal or residualist would argue that the state has no role to play in the care of children except when the family fails. Individuals and families are expected to provide for the care and nurturing of the next generation of workers. If both parents choose to work outside the home then the care of their children must be something parents obtain on their own and the liberal state would encourage the market to fill this niche.

It is important to put Canada's programs in a comparative context. Countries such as France and Sweden have generous and flexible programs of daycare for all

those who need it, whether parents are working outside the home or not.[14] Sweden has long been the example for social democratic countries in terms of the provision of child care as a means to gender equity. Unfortunately, Sweden has also evolved as a result of neo-liberal restructuring of the state and its child care provisions are no longer as generous as they once were. Germany offers parents generous benefits which allow them to stay home with their children whether they have been in the workforce or not.[15] The United States has little or no state involvement in the provision of child care except for welfare recipients.

Three models of child care can be said to exist in Western industrialized countries[16]:

a. Private care model - children under school age are solely the responsibility of the parents who must either provide the care or find it within their family and their circle of acquaintances or purchase it in the private sector. Some care may be offered by volunteer/charitable organizations for families in financial need or for children at risk. Eg. Canada and the U.S. before World War II.

b. Public responsibility model - some countries deem child care to be the responsibility of the state and all families with children within the country are eligible to have their children cared for in state funded and regulated child care centres. This is considered as important for child development as normal schooling and essential for gender equity in employment. If parents pay, it is usually based on their ability to do so. Eg. France, Sweden and Québec. This is the form child care

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[14]For comparative discussions see Baker, 1995, Bussemaker, 1998, Lewis, 1992, and Ungerson, 1997.

[15]Phipps, Shelley. Maternity and Parental Benefits: An International Comparison. Halifax: Dalhousie University, 1998, p.4.

[16]These models are fashioned after categories listed in Baker, 1995, p. 192, with some alterations by the author.

advocates and social democrats have attempted to promote in Canada.

c. Mixed responsibility model - child care services are provided by both the public and private sector and some subsidies are available for families on government income assistance and/or for the working poor. Within the country different levels of governments (federal, provincial/state, or municipalities) may supply services and different jurisdictions may provide more or less support. Regulation is less than in the public responsibility model and, also, may vary by jurisdiction. Employers may also be obliged to provide child care for their employees or may do so voluntarily or as a result of collective bargaining. Companies may or may not be subsidized by the state to do so either through direct subsidies or through tax breaks. Eg. Australia, Canada (except Québec), the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. This is the form which has been supported by the Liberal and Conservative Canadian governments.

Debates over the most appropriate form and/or model have consistently shaped public policy discussions of child care in Canada. Child care has been a victim of Canada's ambivalent nature - an awkward mix of social democratic impulses and traditional liberal tendencies. Political parties have had campaign platforms and made political promises which have enabled them to win the support of a wide range of interest groups. Successful parties were able to promise generously but implement sparingly when it came to the issue of the care of the country's "most important asset" - its children.

The federal governments were pressured to decide if they were going to use social policy to deal with the care of children. If they chose to take a social democratic path and involve themselves in child care, then governments had a further choice: to use public monies to reinforce traditional family roles - that is, find some way to

encourage mothers to stay home to care for their children - or to support and encourage the new, emerging family forms and gender roles.[17] Neither the Liberals nor Conservatives were ever comfortable with deciding whether child care was a responsibility of the federal government or not. It was politically expedient for them, particularly in the 1984 election, to promise action on this issue but it was not in the true nature of the two parties to make public child care a reality because of their liberal, residualist ideals. Successive governments were unwilling to commit themselves to supporting parents to stay home with their children but neither could they bring themselves to commit federal money to an adequate child care system.[18]

As the national political agenda moved to the ideological right, even the political discourse has changed. The neo-liberal language of "choice," small government, debt and deficit, and low taxation has meant that it is easy for the governments to excuse themselves from participation in the provision of child care. Also, as Gotell and Brodie argue, the women's movement has come to be labelled as a 'special interest' group. This implies that "its demands are not in the general interest"

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[17]Peters, Suzanne. "Introduction," in How Families Cope and Why Policymakers Need to Know. Cheal, David et al. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Network, 2001.

[18] Interestingly, at the same time that Canadians have had a political party willing to espouse more traditional roles both for women and for governments (small and non-interventionist), the Reform/Canadian Alliance Party, they have seen the most progress in federal programs facilitating parental roles. The Liberal government extended Employment Insurance payments for parental leave to 52 weeks in January 2001, albeit at a lower level of support (benefits are 55% of average weekly insurable earnings).

and that it "demands privileges which [were] unearned and expensive."[19] Accompanying this change has been a shift in the position of child care as an equality issue for women to one of support for children that enabled the government to move away from direct funding of child care spaces to funding of individual, poor families. It also allowed the government to remove the principle of universality as a prerequisite of provision and yet permitted the government to structure the subsidization of child care through the taxation system to favour the wealthy.

Regardless of public opinion, the question of child care will not go away. People need non-parental child care for their children and they will find it where they can. The danger is that parents will place their children in unregulated, poor quality care because that is all they can afford and, consequently, the children will suffer. In 1984, child care was an important campaign issue. By 1993, it had a diminished role in the political debates and by 2000 it had all but disappeared. This thesis tracks the political discourse beginning with the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and culminating with the 2000 election. Chapter 2 provides the background for the discussions of child care and describes how the federal government came to be involved in it. Chapter 3 deals with the first of the three elections. It was the first radical change of government in the post-Keynsian era and the first election in which women's issues were deemed important. The following chapter briefly follows the new

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[19]Gotell, Lise and Janine Brodie. "Women and Parties in the 1990s: Less Than Ever an Issue of Numbers," in Thorburn, Hugh. Party Politics in Canada. Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1996, p. 69.

government through its two successive terms. The subsequent three chapters describe the 1993 election, the intervening years and the 2000 election, respectively. They depict the changes in the political landscape that have led to the diminution of child care as a subject of elite political discussion.

Chapter 2 - The Backdrop

The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was not the first time child care was squarely on the public policy agenda. During the Second World War, publicly funded child care was provided for women working in essential war industries. In 1943, the Dominion-Provincial Agreement for Wartime Day Nurseries was reached, providing for 50-50 cost sharing between the two levels of government. The Dominion contributed to the funding of the programs but the provinces maintained the responsibility for the establishment and operation of the day care centres.[20] Only Ontario and Quebec, were willing or able to avail themselves of the monies. These were the most heavily industrialized and urbanized provinces in 1943. Both provincial governments vehemently protested when the federal government withdrew funding for the day care programs at the end of the war. Ontario, in fact, passed the Ontario Day Nurseries Act (1946), which was the first of its kind in Canada, in an attempt to salvage existing services. While the province did pass the legislation, there was not vigorous support for funding it provincially. The Globe and Mail reported:

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[20]Varga, Donna. Constructing the Child : a History of Canadian Day Care. Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1997, p. 74.

> While the Provincial Government has expressed concern that any deserving cases should suffer for the cessation of the [federal] plan, welfare officials are agreed that whenever possible mothers shouldn't shirk their responsibility in caring for their children at home in order to boost what is already an equitable income by working daily. "We believe that a child should be brought up in the proper environment in its own home, when possible," said one official.[21]

Access to the program was linked directly to women's participation in the workforce. The federal government did not revisit the question officially until 1966, when it again agreed to share with the provinces the cost of child care under the Canada Assistance Plan(CAP). The funding provided only for families in need, or in danger of falling into poverty.[22]

It was its acknowledgment that there is a role for the federal government to play not only in funding but in shaping a child care program that would help women attain equality of employment in Canada that distinguished the Report of the RCSW. By the end of the century, the recommendations of the Royal Commission seem weak given the intensified demands of child care advocates but these were progressive for their time. The Commission was clear that child care, though financed by the federal government, was a provincial responsibility. It also suggested that most of the operational costs should be borne by parents, albeit based on ability to pay and

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[21]The Globe and Mail, July 11, 1946, quoted in Prentice, Susan Theorizing Political Difference in Toronto's Postwar Child Care Movement, 1996, http://www.childcarecanada.org/resources/CRRUpubs/op8/8op2.html#top

[22]Friendly, Martha. History and Vision: Blending Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Regina: Social Policy Research Unit, 2000, p. 3.

determined on a sliding scale. It did, however, link child care directly to women's ability to obtain gainful employment outside the home as a matter of equity.

The Report of the RCSW was presented to the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau in September of 1970 and tabled in the House of Commons in December. The RCSW's recommendations on daycare were greeted with surprising warmth by members of Parliament in debates and in several speeches by members of the three main parties. Even members known for their traditional, and sometimes even sexist, opinions offered support for day care. F. J. Biggs, Progressive Conservative member from the riding of Pembina, who attained a measure of notoriety by his comments on the state of family life,[23] greeted the RCSW report, by saying he supported daycare centres as "a wonderful idea" but one that the country could not afford.[24] W.G. Dinsdale[25] (PC) said in regards to day care, "It is obvious that this is an adjustment that must be made if we are to make it possible for women to make the contribution to the ... workaday world as well as in the...voluntary service...that only they can make."[26]

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[23]He asserted that "any...man [who] is looking for a 50-50 marriage, that marriage is doomed to utter failure." He also went on to proclaim"[y]ou cannot expect morality in school and hard work if your only reason for existence is to have bigger and better abortions so you can spend more time in the beauty parlour."

[24]Debates of the House of Commons Canada, 3rd Session, 28th Parliament, March 9, 1971, p.4110.

[25]In response to a statement by another Member of Parliament that a member's wife had not spoken to him for three days Dinsdale commented, "Lucky man."

[26] Ibid, p. 4115.

On the other hand, the Trudeau government was reluctant to proceed too ambitiously on any program which required jurisdictional negotiations with the provinces. Child care was an area which was clearly within the purview of the provinces according to the British North America Act (1867) and its federal/provincial division of powers. Any changes to funding or regulation of child care provision would have required serious negotiations between the provinces and the federal government. Provincial governments were happy to take the financial help offered for new social programs but were reluctant to relinquish any control over what they deemed to be provincial areas of jurisdiction. Federal-Provincial relations were experiencing enormous pressures and change, due in large part to Québec's ongoing Quiet Revolution and the October 1970, FLQ crisis. The child care funding in place at the time fell under CAP. This program, negotiated between the federal and provincial governments in 1966, "was one of five pieces of major federal social legislation enacted in the period 1964 to 1966."[27] According to federal bureaucrat, Martha Hynna, the federal government negotiators were weary and wary of further negotiations for new federal-provincial programs and "so they had announced in effect that there were [not] going to be any more programs for a while."[28]

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[27]Osborne, John E. The Evolution of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP): Appendix to the Nielsen Task Force report on the Canada Assistance Plan. Ottawa: National Health and Welfare, 1985, http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/capjack.htm.

[28]Hynna, Martha. Quoted in Timpson, 2001, p. 66.

Monique Bégin asserted, in a recent interview on the Report's influence thirty years after its release, "the report did not remain on the shelf"[29] despite the federal government's disinclination. She did, however, admit that the recommendations on child care had never been implemented. A number of the recommendations were implemented and an Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women was established to orchestrate the government's response to the recommendations.[30] Freda Palteil was appointed to coordinate the work of the committee, setting up five different working groups. One dealt with women's economic participation while another, separate group, dealt with family life and community services, including child care. This working group structure thus contributed to separating the issues of child care and employment conceptually and, thereby, set the stage for these issues to become unlinked in federal government policy formation.[31]

The Commissioners of the RCSW argued that adequate child care services were a necessity in order for women to assume an equal role in the world of work, politics and public life. However, even amongst the commissioners there was disagreement. In a separate statement submitted with the report by Jacques Henripin, while endorsing support for child care to families who "cannot give proper care and

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[29]CBC Radio. Monique Bégin, former Executive Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, CBC This Morning. March 8, 2001.

[30]Timpson, Annis May. Driven Apart: Women's Employment Equality and Child Care in Canadian Public Policy. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001, p. 54.

[31]Ibid., p. 54.

education to their children," he did not feel it was appropriate to subsidize to families who were not in need, sending children under four or five to a daycare centre rather than caring for their children themselves. He argued that daycare centres were "really an extension of the school system" and that most Canadians would not support sending children to "school" so young.[32] He obviously felt that care of young children was the responsibility of parents.

Henripin's sentiments were echoed in a poll conducted in 1970, which revealed that 80% percent of respondents thought that married women should not take a job outside the home if they had young children.[33] Indeed, only 15% of new mothers returned to work within two years after the birth of their first child (compared to 56% twenty years later).[34] Only 32% of the work force aged 20-44 years was women.[35]

Since the RCSW in 1970, many people and groups have not only spoken out against child care as support for women working outside the home but also against child care given or paid for by anyone other than parents. John Bowlby and the Tavistock group of psychoanalysts, of which he was a part, were influential in shaping public

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[32]Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, separate statement, p. 424.

[33]Quoted in Timpson, 2001, p. 67.

[34]Statistics Canada. "Changes in Women's Work Continuity," Canadian Social Trends, Autumn 1997, p. 6.

[35]Statistics Canada. "Civilian labour force, by age and sex, annual averages, 1946 to 1975," Historical Statistics of Canada, D160-174.

opinion in the United Kingdom, in the 1950s, '60s and '70s.[36] Canadians have always closely identified with Britain and public opinion has been shaped by that affinity, particularly in regards to social policy. Because of Bowlby's *Attachment Theory* "mothers were strongly discouraged from working, and it was regarded as bad practice to place young children in day care." It argued that "a warm continuous relationship with a mother or mother figure in infancy is essential to mental health."[37] One of the main tenets of R.E.A.L. Women, a dominant, anti-feminist organization in Canada and elsewhere, is that "the family is society's most important unit, since the nurturing of its members is best accomplished in the family setting."[38] R.E.A.L. Women lobbied successive governments for a return to the traditional family values of the male breadwinner-female caregiver model. They argued, "that child care funds should be paid directly to the parents to allow them to choose the kind of care of their children, whether home, private or institutional care. Equal child care tax credits should be paid to parents regardless of which type of care they choose – whether home care or substitute care."[39] Conservative and religious groups and politicians have argued that even if women were determined to work outside the home it was not the place of the

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[36]Penn, Helen. "How Should We Care for Babies and Toddlers?: An analysis of practice in out-of-home care for children under three." London: Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, London University, 1998. Occasional Paper 10, p. Section 2b. http://www.childcarecanada.org/resources/CRRUpubs/op10/s2bt2.html

[37]Ibid.

[38]R.E.A.L.Women. "Who We Are." http://www.realwomenca.com/html/who_we_are.html

[39]Ibid, "Statement on Child Care."

state to encourage them. Nor was it appropriate for individuals to receive financial assistance for the non-parental care of their children when others who chose to care for their own children at home were sacrificing advantages to their lifestyle to do so.

Proponents have advocated for publicly funded and regulated child care for the sake of women's equal opportunities and in the name of gender equity, asserting that it is no more than common sense. Gender equity would provide for the most efficient use of Canada's human resources. Even the basis for establishing the RCSW was to "permit the better use of the skills and education of women."[40]

Echoing the RCSW, the 1984 Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment argued that, "[it is time to set aside the emotional tangents of this issue and confront it directly. Women work."[41] The report went on to say, "child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers."[42] The Commission's original mandate did not specifically include child care as one of the areas to be studied but Justice Abella asserted that "[f]or women who are mothers, a major barrier to equality in the workplace is the absence of affordable childcare of adequate quality." The Royal Commission solicited input from almost 3000 organizations and individuals from a wide range of interests and asked for comment on not only on those issues

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[40]Report of the RCSW as quoted in Timpson, p. 31. There were 468 briefs in total presented to the Royal Commission, 107 of which favoured non-maternal child care for the children of working women.

[41]Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, p. 177.

[42]Ibid, p. 178.

outlined in the Commission's mandate but expanded it to include child care. The Commission received 62 submissions and 66.1% of them included comment on child care.

From these submissions, in particular from the one made by Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, Abella realized that there was a need to provide adequate, high quality child care in order to provide equality of employment opportunities to women. Included, therefore, in her recommendations was the call for a "National Childcare Act" that would provide child care with national standards of accessibility, affordability, and quality for all Canadians. Abella saw the system of child care she ultimately envisioned to be as universal and as much the norm as the public education system. Exceeding her instructions, Abella forced child care as an issue of women's equality into the realm of federal public policy discussions again.

Canada was also party to a movement among United Nation member states to end discrimination against women and child care came to be included in those discussions. In 1980, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to which Canada was a signatory, included child care services as a means to "prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work."[43]

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[43]United Nations. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Ottawa: Human Rights Program, Secretary of State, 1980, p. 6

Children have also been the reason for the advocacy of publicly funded child care, particularly since the 1980s. Meg Luxton argues that "[t]he assumption that child rearing is a private responsibility puts children at risk."[44] Child care advocates have used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in 1989 by every government in the U.N. except the U.S. and Sudan[45], to make the case for publicly funded and regulated child care. They argued that the first of the three broad areas of rights to promote children's interests - *provision: rights to goods, services and resources* - included appropriate child care. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the long term consequences of offering good quality, publicly funded child care. Gordon Cleveland and Michael Krashinsky's study, The Benefits and Costs of Good Child Care, concluded that "A significant number of children of working parents are receiving inadequate care. Partly because of this, they enter school behind other children and never catch up."[46] Moreover, Gillian Doherty et al concluded in their study entitled Child Care: Canada Can't Work Without It:

> [h]igh quality child care provides a positive experience for all children that encourages the development of their social, language, and cognitive skills. It can also provide effective early intervention for children with developmental delays or disabilities or whose

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[44]Luxton, Meg. "Social Inclusion, Women's Equality and Children's Well-Being: Putting Children and Their Well-Being on the Agenda." Forthcoming, p. 18.

[45]Penn, Helen. "The Rights Of Young Children." London: Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, London University, 1999. http://www.childcarecanada.org/resources/CRRUpubs/factsheets/sheet8.html

[46]Cleveland and Krashinsky, p. 60.

> development is at risk because of extreme poverty, neglect, parental illness, or other stress factors.[47]

The fight for a national child care program did not begin with the 1984 federal election but it was the first time the two main political parties had attempted to garner votes by courting women voters. It was the first of several very important elections for the issue of child care. It was also, however, the first time a federal election had been fought with the debt and deficit as the central political issues and it saw the election of the first federal governments aiming consciously to move the country to the ideological right.[48]

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[47]Doherty, Gillian et al. Child Care: Canada Can't Work Without It. Toronto: Child Care Resources and Research Unit, 1995, p. i.

[48]See Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms and Linda McQuaig, Shooting the Hippo: Death by Deficit and Other Canadian Myths and Marjorie Griffin Cohen "From the Welfare State to Vampire Capitalism" in Patricia Evans and Gerda Wekerle, eds., Women and the Canadian Welfare State: Challenges and Change.

Chapter 3 - The 1984 Federal Election

1984 was the year that child care advocates thought that all their years of lobbying for a federally funded and regulated, universally accessible, not for profit, child care would pay off. Certainly the rhetoric of the election would have suggested that good things were finally going to happen. In the dying days of their government, the Liberals had set up the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (RCEE) and the Task Force on Child Care, chaired by Katie Cooke. These moves seemed to demonstrate the government's serious commitment to imposing change on these two related issues. Child care advocates could not be blamed for interpreting these actions of the Liberals as attempts to force progress in women's equality on whatever government was elected in the 1984 election. However, the establishment of these inquiries could also be characterized as the typical reactions of a Canadian government under significant political pressure - appoint a commission to study the situation. The Liberals were able to avoid any real actions yet score some political points while at the same time make life difficult for the "other" party many thought would win the federal contest, the Progressive Conservatives.

The 1984 election took place in an increasingly neo-conservative political atmosphere. Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in

1979 and, in 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States. Both Thatcher and Reagan's political agendas came to be synonymous with neo-conservatism and each of them was determined to reduce the role played by the state in social policy. Thatcher won the election wanting to "tame a greedy and parasitic public sector."[49] Reagan promised drastic cuts to U.S. public spending while pushing through increases in defence spending and major tax cuts. These two countries were Canada's closest allies and two of it's most important trading partners and thus, politics in Canada were heavily influenced by events in both the U.K. and the U.S.

The late 1970s had been a period of what appeared to be chronic inflation. Lending institutions in both the U.S. and Canada had raised interest rates to record highs in an attempt to bring soaring wages and prices under control. The 1979 oil shock and subsequent unemployment plunged North America into the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s and '40s. By 1984, the economy had still not recovered. Just before the election call, the Bank of Canada interest rates were 12.36%, the Canadian dollar had fallen to a new low of 75.44 cents U.S. and the official unemployment rate was 11.2%.[50] The Conservatives blamed the Liberals for the recession of the early 1980s, caused, they argued, by the spending spree on which the Liberals had taken the country over the last

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[49]Quoted in Savoie, Donald J. Thatcher, Reagan, Mulroney: in Search of a New Bureaucracy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, p. 90.

[50]The Globe and Mail, June 29, 1984, p. B1 and July 7, 1984, p. 7.

sixteen years. The dual phantoms of the federal government deficit and debt had begun to edge most other issues from the national political consciousness.

Brian Mulroney became leader of the Progressive Conservative Party in June of 1983. His leadership campaign consisted of promises to do away with big government and to get spending on public services under control. His focus was clearly market oriented. When Maclean's Magazine asked all the Conservative leadership candidates what relief they would offer Canada's 1.6 million unemployed, Mulroney answered "I would offer tax incentives for investment and research, cut red tape and send out signals that Canada welcomes investment." He was also decidedly conservative on women's issues.

John Turner won the Liberal leadership in June of 1984 after Pierre Trudeau retired. Before the leadership race the polls indicated that the Conservatives were likely to win the election easily.[51] The effect of the Liberal leadership convention was to put that party ahead temporarily but the Liberal Party suffered from the strong distaste Canadians felt for a government which had been in power almost continuously since 1968, with one brief interlude from June to December 1979. The Conservatives quickly retook the lead and stayed there for the rest of the election.

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[51]"Although some Canadians might have agreed with many of Trudeau's objectives they grew to resent his methods." (Bercuson et al, Sacred Trust) The "unkindest cut of all" came when Trudeau's last act in office was the awarding of seventeen patronage plums (judgeships, Senate seats, and ambassadorships) to Liberal party faithful. Turner had to "wave away the putrid stench of yet another unspeakable round of Liberal patronage..." (Simpson, "The Opening Shot" The Globe and Mail, July 10, 1984, p. 6.)

The 1984 election was considered a high point for women. Each of the three major Canadian political parties doubled their number of women candidates and more women than ever succeeded at the polls.[52] At the same time, in the United States, the Democrats had just chosen the first woman to be on the presidential ticket. Walter Mondale, the Democratic candidate for president, had chosen as his running mate Geraldine Ferraro. Women's groups in the U.S. and Canada were ecstatic. A gender gap in voting had appeared first in Britain "where women voters were less supportive of Margaret Thatcher than men."[53] Studies had produced evidence that since 1968 American female voters were voting differently than male voters in substantial numbers. In Canada in the spring of 1984, both the Gallup and Globe-CROP organizations reported poll results which showed women favoured the federal Liberals and were less likely to support the Tories than male voters by as much as 12%.[54] In May, the political party caucuses, Members of Parliament, and Senators received copies of a report produced by the political and social affairs division of the Parliamentary Library which detailed the voting preferences and differences of men and women. Dorothy Lipovenko of the Globe and Mail asserted that "the political concerns of women - and the potential for converting those concerns into votes - [took] on the highest profile they

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[52]Gotell and Brodie,, p. 67.

[53]Gotell and Brodie, p. 66.

[54]The Globe and Mail Newspaper, July 5, 1984, p. 7.

[had] ever had in a federal election campaign."[55] The Conservatives claimed that an "emphasis on women [would] be part of an over-all Québec election strategy..."[56]

All of the parties were careful to include platform planks on issues affecting women and families. In their campaign platforms, the three major parties gave child care advocates hope that the next parliament might be the one to pass legislation which would give these advocates the kind of child care for which they had worked. The Liberal leader in their campaign document, *The Issues: John Turner Speaks Out*, claimed, "I believe in enlarging the day care opportunities of women so that they can participate in the workforce."[57] It is important to note, however, that the policy proposal on child care occupied only one sentence in a 28 page document. In their policy backgrounder for the federal election subsection, *Social, Economic and Political Equality for Women,* the party included a section on child care, listing their accomplishments:

1. The Task Force on Child Care, headed by Dr. Katie Cook, was established in June 1984 to address the lack of reliable daycare alternatives for the children of working mothers. The federal government currently provides half the costs for licensed services to low income earners through the Canada Assistance Plan.
2. The child care deduction was doubled from $2,000 per child, to a maximum of $8,000 per family, in 1983.

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[55]The Globe and Mail Newspaper, July 14, 1984, p. 4.

[56]Ibid, June 20, 1984, p. 5.

[57]Liberal Party of Canada. The Issues: John Turner Speaks Out. Ottawa: The Liberal Party of Canada, 1984, p.

3. Major amendments to the Canadian Labour Code were passed in June 1984 to improve child care leave provisions covering adoption, and to provide job protection in the case of pregnancy and during child care leave.

The New Democrats had the most detailed plans of the three major parties. In their platform backgrounder, *New Economic Opportunities for Women*, they promised to fight for women's equality "By increasing access to job opportunities for women who are parents through universal, affordable day care and improved parental leave and benefits for both parents." In another campaign statement, *Making Economic Equality for Women a Reality*, the party promised:

> **Parental leave and expanded child care.** The federal government must live up to its responsibility to ensure that women have access to job opportunities by increasing day care programs for Canada's children. The joint parenting responsibilities of both fathers and mothers must also be recognized by replacing maternity benefits in the Unemployment Insurance Act with parental leave provisions.

Ed Broadbent, the New Democrat leader, outlined the party's social policy platform in Toronto on August 15th. It included the following list of government responsibilities:

1. A National Child Care Act based on the medicare model.
2. Increased funding through national legislation which includes start up and capital funds for non-profit child care facilities, redefinition of day care funding under CAP and revision of the income tax system.
3. Set out standards and ensure that children receive care in licensed and regulated programmes.
4. Support direct federal funding to day care centres as an interim step until a National Child Care Act and accompanying measures are in place.
5. A direct grant of $5 per day for each licensed space, and a child care resource fund of $25 per year to be administered by the provinces and territories for each child under thirteen.

> Although this program, which would cost $300,000 million (sic) the first year, is only an interim measure, it will be a significant step.[58]

It can be, and undoubtedly was, argued that it was easy for the New Democrats to promise extensive programs paid for by federal monies because they knew that they were unlikely to have the opportunity or responsibility for implementing them. However, in the past the NDP had often influenced government policy while in opposition.

The Progressive Conservative Party created a *Progressive Conservative Agenda for Government* at their Québec caucus in July, 1984 with a policy area entitled "Issues of Concern to Women." In it they committed the party to:

> endeavour to find rapid, realistic and effective solutions to the urgent problems of child care and, will play a leadership role to improve the sharing of responsibilities to children between parents and society as a whole. Together with business, labour and the provinces, a P.C. government will encourage the establishment of innovative child care programs in communities and in the workplace.

This signals that a PC government would be unlikely to be directly involved in the creation of day care spaces but would "encourage" others to do it. In the "Question and Answers" section of the same document, to the question, "Is your party prepared to commit Federal funds to expand day care in Canada and to make them financially accessible to all parents?" they suggested the following "Points in Response" for their candidates:

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[58]Broadbent, Edward. New Democratic Party Statement, Toronto, August 15.

1. The Federal government currently supports day care only as a welfare service available to the poorest families. Federal funding is provided through the Canada Assistance Plan. This policy ignores the needs of all children for good care.

2. For all parents who must hold a job and raise a family, day care is an essential service. Support for the family, no matter the configuration, is important.

3. The changes in our society which have made it necessary for parents, single or married, to work, means that opportunities for care of these children must be available.

4. A Progressive Conservative Government would work with the provinces and business to determine the various options of increasing high quality, affordable, and accessible care for children.

5. We are prepared to establish a Parliamentary Task Force with a short but clear mandate to examine the provisions of quality child care throughout Canada.

6. Simultaneously, we pledge a comprehensive review of the tax system as it applies to child care exemptions, deductions and credits, with a view to making it more effective in assisting working women and families.

The remarkable feature of these responses is that they do not answer the question posed – that is, whether the Conservatives were willing to commit funds to child care or not. However, they are sufficiently detailed as to confuse or, at least, to quiet most questioners. There are also references to continued reliance on the tax system to fund individual parents rather than provide direct funding to day care facilities.

Turner said many of the right things during the leadership race and during the election in response to questions on women's issues, championing retraining for women,

affirmative action in the public sector and the principle of equal pay for women.[59] His main focus in the election, however, was the economy and the federal deficit. During the leadership race, Turner said, "I will give priority to economic questions."[60] He promised to cut $15 billion per year from the federal deficit "by finding more efficient ways of delivering social services, creating a more efficient administration and avoiding duplication of provincial services."[61] These are not the words of a leader who is about to create a new comprehensive, publicly-funded social program.

Ed Broadbent, NDP leader, agreed almost immediately to NAC's women's debate. Mulroney agreed on July 18th and Turner held out until the 24th of July. Turner's election performance spoke loudly of a lack of understanding of the changing role of women and their expectations. In two separate episodes, Turner was caught by the media patting Liberal women candidates on the behind. When confronted, he excused himself by saying, "I'm a hugger, I'm a tactile politician. I'm slapping people all over the place."[62] These events caused a significant reaction from the press and women's groups. In Kitchener, a women's group created and sold a cardboard "Turner Shield," designed to cover the posteriors of women politicians when Turner

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[59]The Globe and Mail Newspaper, June 16, 1984, p. 5.

[60]The Globe and Mail Newspaper, May 14, 1984, p5.

[61]The Globe and Mail Newspaper, May 8, 1984, p. 5.

[62]The Globe and Mail Newspaper, July 21, 1984, p. 1.

was visiting. Several women's groups around the country sent letters of protest to the Liberal Party. It haunted Turner throughout the campaign.

Mulroney made it clear that his number one priority for the country was the economy and reducing public spending. In a 1983 speech to an Ottawa PC federal riding association, he said:

> "The tragic process of swedenizing of Canada must come to a halt... I am a Canadian and I want to be free, to the extent reasonably possible, of government intrusion and direction and regimentation and bureaucratic overkill..." "it is absolutely clear that the private sector is and must continue to be the driving force in the economy... The role and purpose of government policy will relate primarily to how we can nurture and stimulate the Canadian private sector. A Progressive Conservative government will create an overall economic environment which provides exactly this kind of support."[63]

He also vowed to hand out "pink slips and running shoes to bureaucrats"[64] if he succeeded in winning the election. These are not statements consistent with a party considering the creation of a brand new program offering publicly-funded and regulated child care.

In 1983, Mulroney published a collection of speeches he had made in recent years, claiming that after reading this slim volume no one who read his book would be under any illusions as to where he stands. The very construction of the book and the

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[63]Quoted in Gollner, Andrew and Daniel Salée. "A Turn to the Right? Canada in the Post-Trudeau Era," Canada Under Mulroney: An End-of-Term Report. Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1988, p. 15.

[64]Brian Mulroney quoted in Savoie, Donald. Thatcher, Reagan, Mulroney: in Search of a New Bureaucracy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, p. 4..

speeches he chose to include are instructive. The premise was productivity and industrial strategy but Mulroney also included addresses in which he spoke on constitutional issues, interprovincial relations, and leadership. He was harshly critical of the Trudeau government and spending, saying, "by its excessive spending [it has managed to] diminish gravely Ottawa's capacity to act as a stabilizing force within our national economy."[65] Continuing on regarding Canada's fiscal position, he claimed that the Liberals were leaving the government "so broke from a decade and more of abusive spending that it cannot help anyone...it has exhausted all of its fiscal room for manoeuvre." According to Mulroney the government had "hit rock bottom."[66] In another speech, he spoke of the high levels of spending by governments: "...they believe that they are better equipped to spend our money than we are. This is a philosophy of state-directed planning which is profoundly paternalistic and inherently erroneous..." If this was truly where he stood, then it would have been highly unlikely that Mulroney would have been willing to create a new, expensive child care system that was controlled by Ottawa. Mulroney demonstrates the ambivalence of Canadians to the role government should assume. "Governments must ... exercise frugality and prudence in its use [of taxpayers' money], leaving as much as possible in the hands of the only wealth-producers and job creators in Canada – namely the widget makers." He goes on to say: "It is [the] vital responsibility of government to demonstrate compassion for

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[65]Mulroney, Brian. Where I Stand. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983, p. 7.

[66]Ibid, p. 45.

the needy and assistance for the disadvantaged, the equalization of opportunity for all and an elevated sense of social responsibility."[67] Mulroney did not include in his book a single article on social policy.

Mulroney also had begun to work at establishing a close relationship with Ronald Reagan. In late June, Mulroney travelled to Washington with an entourage of five, including his wife, Mila, to meet with the U.S. President. The President Reagan had already demonstrated that he did not look favourably on government incursions into social programs.[68] Mulroney used his visit to Washington as proof that he was "a credible prime minister in waiting."[69] He, too, was opposed to government taking a leading role in society. A secret strategy paper planning how a Tory government would work claimed it would "view its overall role in society as radically different from the interventionist Trudeau philosophy. It will be a facilitator and helper – not an active player."[70] The men who drafted this strategy paper were some of Mulroney's closest friends and advisors.

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[67]Ibid, p. 13-14.

[68]Ronald Reagan, in his first Inaugural Address, when speaking about the economic crisis in which the U.S. found itself, argued that "government is not the solution..." On the contrary, he believed that it was "time to check and reverse the growth of government..." Like Canada, the U.S. is a federal state with all the constitutional problems that entails. Reagan intended "to curb the size and influence of the Federal establishment and to demand recognition of the distinction between the powers [of the two levels of government]." He contended that the role of government is to "provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it." He felt it was time to "get government back within its means, and to lighten our punitive tax burden." http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres61.html

[69]Maclean's Magazine, July 2, 1984, p.12.

[70]Maclean's Magazine, April 23, 1984, p. 41.

Mulroney had problems with credibility on women's issues and after a slip which offended a number of Conservative women, he appointed Jocelyne Côté-O'Hara as his adviser on women's issues[71]. His wife, Mila, was frequently featured with him on the campaign trail and there were more pictures of her keeping her husband company in the Globe and Mail and Maclean's than either of the other leaders' wives.[72] Both Mrs. Turner and Mrs. Mulroney lived very traditional lives as political wives and neither worked outside the home. The Globe and Mail questioned the two leaders' credibility on the issue of women in their parties:

> The record shows that women candidates nearly doubled in the two leading parties. But many are almost certainly placed in loser ridings. Sixteen of 43 women Liberals are running in the PC-controlled west. More than half the Tory candidates are running in Quebec, where the party held a lone seat.[73]

The most significant event which encouraged child care advocates to believe that there was hope was the Women's Debate organized by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). It was the first time the leaders agreed to such a debate (and the last) and the first time women's issues dominated the political

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[71]"During his campaign for the Tory leadership Mulroney responded to a female questioner's inquiry about the role of women in his party by suggesting that 'I'd be glad to take you out for a drink later to talk about it." Maclean's Magazine, February 20, 1984, p. 16

[72]Between July 16th and election day Mila Mulroney appeared in the Globe and Mail, on the campaign trail with her husband, eight times to once for Lucille Broadbent and three times for Geills Turner. Mrs. Mulroney usually appeared either holding onto her husbands arm or hand, walking behind him, or gazing up at him. The other two were more likely to be portrayed as working on the campaign.

[73]Globe and Mail, August 13, 1984, p. 4.

stage. In the days before the event, the Globe and Mail's Ross Howard opined, under the headline

> Credibility on line as politicians face women's debate [that] in their unprecedented campaigns to win the 52 per cent of voters who are women and neutralize any risk of a 'gender gap,' the Conservatives and Liberals may have attracted more scrutiny than they wished. What concerns Mr. Turner's and Mr. Mulroney's advisers is that the debate is certain to raise contradictions between policy and the record, and it may make women the arbitrators of the credibility the parties have tried so hard to sell to everyone.[74]

The debate took place on August 15th, late in the election. The three leaders (all men) were questioned by four panellists (all women). Chaviva Hosek, NAC President, in her introduction, noted optimistically, "This historic occasion marks the beginning of a new tradition which now takes its natural place in the political process of Canada."[75] The questions were pointed and asked the leaders to tell the voters just what they were prepared to do on a variety of "women's issues." John Turner, Liberal leader, began by saying "I will make to you only those promises that I can keep. These answers may not always completely satisfy you but I can guarantee to you that they will be honest." It was apparent that he was warning the panel and audience that he really did not feel he could promise much because of the state of government finances.

Topics covered in the debate were: federal training programs, abortion, personal financial credit for women, decreasing expenditures on armaments, federal

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[74]The Globe and Mail, August 13, 1984, p. 1.

[75]CBC TV and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. Women's Debate 1984, Archive of the Canadian Women's Movement, University of Ottawa, video recording.

make-work projects, equal pay for work of equal value, affirmative action, rights of status Indian women marrying non-natives, violence against women and several others. Child care was only one of the issues in the debate but it received a sizeable amount of play.

The question on child care was "How much more money would you be ready to set aside to provide affordable child care services for all families and in what shape will this contribution be provided?" Only Ed Broadbent and John Turner answered the question. (See Appendix I for a transcript of the question and answers.) Because of the format of the debate, Brian Mulroney was not quizzed on this question nor did he choose to speak to it. The leaders had spoken up on other issues on which they were not questioned, including answering previous questions in the answer to the one they had just been asked. Mulroney made no effort to address the issue. His only comment on child care in the entire debate had been in his opening statement: "Where women have to or have chosen to work outside the home, *and it is acceptable*, only 10% of their young children will benefit from day care" (emphasis added). He was clearly uncomfortable with the issue. Turner seemed remarkably unprepared for the question, though he must have known it would be asked. He promised very little in concrete action other than convening a federal-provincial conference to discuss child care. He stressed the importance of choice and said, "You have to give options, possibilities to women, possibilities... not an obligatory method, not one mandatory method [of child care]." Turner also dodged the issue by reiterating that child care is

primarily a provincial responsibility. Broadbent pushed him to take the initiative as the federal government had done on Medicare in 1968. When Turner criticized Broadbent for suggesting the investment of $300 million only, Broadbent responded that at least it was a beginning. Turner commented that at the 1982 PC convention a poll of delegates showed that 74% of them opposed increased funding for day care facilities (this charge was later proved to be inaccurate). Mulroney remained silent on this topic.

The concluding question of the debate was "Why should we believe you now?" It was clear both from the immediate response by the audience to the leaders' answers - applause was most frequent and loudest and longest for Ed Broadbent - and from this question that women were aware that elections were times for empty promises.

In a post-debate interview, Chaviva Hosek made no comment on the answers to the child care question being a long awaited breakthrough. In the days immediately following the debate, the media did not report any breakthroughs. Even the mainstream, conservative media found nothing original or alarming in the debate. Canadian Press commented, "Little new offered women during leaders TV debate."[76] The only place child care headlined was in The London Free Press and the comment was "Turner tells women Liberals will boost day-care deduction." Later commentators spoke of this event as a shining moment in the history of the child care movement, yet,

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[76]Cape Breton Post, August 16, 1984, p. 1.

Turner did not commit himself to a national child care program and Mulroney did not even speak to the question. Mulroney's only statement on the issue was extremely condescending, telling women that it was "acceptable" for them to choose to work outside the home. Mulroney, who by now was confident of victory, was being careful to avoid controversy.

That the debate occurred and that the three leaders agreed to participate was seen to be significant by the media. It was covered by CBC, CTV, Global, Radio Canada, and PBA TV. There was extensive reporting on it Maclean's Magazine both before and after the event. Ronald Anderson wrote a piece which appeared in the Globe and Mail's business section on August 17th entitled "Debate on Women's Issues Reflects Their Growing Clout." Both editorials in the paper on the same day addressed the debate. Jeffrey Simpson praised the leaders for "actually grappling with issues..."[77]

Women were not alone in pressing the government on issues of child care and parental leave. Labour organizations were increasingly bargaining for and winning concessions on these issues.[78] They were also lobbying governments at both the federal and provincial levels for national plans.[79] The 1980 Ontario Federation of Labour convention adopted a "radical day care policy" and trade unionists were active

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[77]Globe and Mail, August 17, 1984, p. 6 and B2.

[78]Globe and Mail, August 24, 1984, p. B8.

[79]The Public Service Alliance of Canada, Canadian Union of Public Employees, the National Union of Provincial Government Employees and the Canadian Teachers' Federation. See Phillips, 1989, p. 172.

members of Action Day Care, a child care advocacy group formed in 1979 in Toronto.[80] As well, anti-poverty groups and non-partisan or ideological child care coalitions were working to secure government subsidized and regulated child care as a right.

On September 4th, Canada elected Brian Mulroney and his Progressive Conservative party to head the Canadian government with the largest majority of seats in the House of Commons in the history of the country. The Liberals were reduced to 40 seats while the PCs won 211, with the NDP winning 30. The popular vote was 50% for the Conservatives, an increase from 32.5% in the 1980 election, the greatest increase ever recorded. The Liberals dropped to only 28% from 44.3% in 1980. The New Democrats, remarkably, dropped by only 1% in the popular vote and two seats. The beginnings of the regional divide that would later dominate Canadian politics could already be seen in 1984. The Liberals hung on to only two seats west of Ontario. Québec, where the Liberals had won all but one seat in 1980, went Tory blue except for 17 seats, including Jean Chrétien's.

The election was more a rejection of the Trudeau/Turner Liberals than a love affair with the Conservatives. Peter C. Newman argued, "Brian Mulroney won the election, but the Liberals defeated themselves."[81] The issue of the patronage

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[80]Colley, Sue. "Day Care and the Trade Union Movement in Ontario," Resources for Feminist Research, V. 10, n. 2.

[81]Maclean's, September 10, 1989, p. 46.

appointments dogged Turner throughout the campaign. The Conservatives, and the media, were successful at linking Turner to Trudeau's record. The electorate was simply doing what voters typically do after one party has been in power for a long time, they "threw the rascals out."

For all the talk of women and their voting patterns, the increased number of women candidates and the lip service paid to "women's issues" by the leaders and the Women's Debate, the face of the House of Commons showed little change in gender make-up. Only 23 women were elected to the House of Commons, impressive only in that it was an increase of eight from the previous parliament. There was some hope that the cause of child care would be advanced but neither of the leaders had made hard and fast promises and Mulroney was the most skilful at leaving the field open. At some point in the campaign he promised, "Canada shall, under a Progressive Conservative government, have an effective national system of child care."[82] However, as Bercuson et al said in their book Sacred Trust, "On policy questions, Mulroney's platform as he ran for office was vague enough to permit almost anything once he was safely in power."[83] Mulroney did not believe in big government nor that the public sector was the best way to provide services. The new Prime Minister firmly believed in the wisdom of the market and free enterprise and competition.

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[82]Quoted on the Childcare Resource and Research Unit web page, Voices for child care, http://www.childcarecanada.org/voices/voices.html

[83]Bercuson, David, J.L. Granatstein, and W.R. Young. Sacred Trust? Brian Mulroney and the Conservative Party in Power. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1986, p. 7.

The 1984 election rhetoric was a high water mark in terms of women's issues, and child care in particular. (Maclean's had twelve stories specifically about women, political wives, or women's issues from January to the end of September, including stories about Geraldine Ferraro's amazing breakthrough in the U.S.. The Globe and Mail had 33 from June to September.) Susan Prentice wrote "the attention paid to the issue [child care] during the 1984 election reflects the current process of institutionalization of childcare in and by the state."[84] The assumption was that the question of child care had become not when but what form would it take. Susan Phillips credits Mulroney with being the first Canadian government leader to promise to "make child care a priority issue by introducing a national child care policy" in the 1984 election and, in fairness, Mulroney did, in fact, introduce a bill in to the House of Commons to give Canada a national child care plan, albeit not one that met the expectations of child care advocates..

The most significant aspect of the 1984 election was the shift to the right it represented. Both Mulroney and Turner ran campaigns based on fiscal conservatism and retrenchment. The debt and the deficit played a major role in the leaders' debates and the parties' platforms. Mulroney represented himself as a champion of conservatism but with a heart. He promised to reform government spending but vowed that Canada's social programs were a "sacred trust." Jeffrey Simpson (Globe and

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[84]Prentice, 1988, p. 59.

Mail) dubbed Turner "the Conservative Liberal."[85] In the Women's Debate, Turner said that he would only make those promises he believed he could fulfil in light of the difficult economic situation Canada faced. Even Broadbent talked about cutting programs and dealing with the deficit. Despite the economic focus of the election, child care as a women's issue achieved a level of recognition not previously attained.

[85]Globe and Mail, August 3, p. 6.

Chapter 4 - Between the Two Elections

The Royal Commission on Equality in Employment was established on the 23rd of June, 1983. Its mandate was not only to explore barriers to equality in employment among men and women but also barriers to employment opportunities and treatment of native Canadians, disabled persons, and visible minorities. Justice Rosalie Abella, however, "pushed her inquiry to the margins - even beyond the boundaries"[86] by inviting comments regarding child care in addition to the mandated areas of inquiry from nearly 3000 groups and individuals. Abella sought and received two extensions to the time-frame for her study so her report was not completed until after the 1984 election.

The Cooke Task Force was established by the Liberal government in May 1984. Its mandate was to assess the adequacy and need for child care services and paid parental leave in Canada in terms of:

> (a) the system of financial support provided by the federal and provincial governments
> (b) affordability and availability, to parents at different levels of income in various regions of the country, of child care services that are consistent with their needs and preferences

[86]Timpson, p. 102.

as well as to make recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, concerning the federal government's role in the development of a system of quality child care in Canada, with particular reference to:

> (a) financing measures, including the taxation system, public insurance schemes, transfer payments and federal/provincial cost-sharing arrangements
> (b) other aspects of the federal government's role in relation to child care, including its role as employer.[87]

The Task Force received more than 200 submissions from organizations, individuals and groups. The organizations represented a wide variety of interests including unions, child care providers and advocates, women's groups, the Canadian Diabetes Association, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and the Vanier Institute for the Family. As well, the Task Force sent out surveys to 3.8 million households and had replies from 7000 parents. The report was delivered to the government in 1986. The Liberals had succeeded in making child care an issue for the new Conservative government.

At the press conference held by the Task Force in March 1986 to announce the presentation of its report, [88] Cooke explained, "Our rationale here relates not only to the child...but to the health and welfare of the family, of parents. Also, we see child care as a societal need and responsibility." (See Appendix II for a transcript of the

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[87]Status of Women Canada. Report of the Task Force on Child Care. Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1986, p. xxiii.

[88]National Archives of Canada. National Press Theatre, Acc.#1986-0283, Item #24785, consultation # CNPT382.

press conference.) Committee members also expressed a sense of urgency, saying, "[t]he result of this information that we now have accumulated and have available to us, has led us to the conviction that in Canada today child care is in a state of crisis and that we cannot avoid or evade this situation." As committee member, Jack London, explained: "[i]n the report we have recommended two halves of a whole process. One side is a series of recommendations dealing with the provision of child care services in Canada and the other half being the extension of parental leave rights on the birth or adoption of a child." The report was detailed, extensive and the recommendations came with a hefty price tag. It was everything for which the child care movement had hoped. The members of the Task Force made it very clear that "this is not simply a parental responsibility. This is a public responsibility." But, even they were under no illusions about the new government. "All we can tell you about the commitment of the government of the day is what we read, by and large, in the media reports and there was a campaign promise to the effect that child care was a priority issue."

While their motives for setting up the two inquiries may have been questionable, Liberal Members of Parliament were nonetheless happy to take credit for the work of the two commissions in the subsequent parliament. Warren Allmand (Lib.), in response to a speech on the RCEE by the (Conservative) Minister of Employment and Immigration, Flora MacDonald, claimed:

> When the Honourable Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Lloyd Axworthy) appointed Judge Abella to carry out this commission, the initiative was indicative of the Government of Canada's commitment

> to increase the employability and productivity of disadvantaged groups.[89]

When Secretary of State, Walter McLean, criticized the Liberals by saying, "[The] previous government did not distinguish itself with movement in this area (child care)," Lloyd Axworthy replied, "Who set up the [Katie Cooke] task force?"[90]

Both reports delivered findings that child care advocates wanted to hear, however, the two committees reported to a new government. Rhetorically, the new Mulroney government claimed to be very accepting of the reports but Rianne Mahon argues that the Conservative government was "committed to pursuing a markedly neo-liberal agenda."[91] The Tory caucus had, among its members, supporters of the anti-feminist group REAL Women and were very concerned with government spending, so it was not surprising that the government would appoint yet another "task force" to further study the situation with a set of goals distinct from the other two. Even before Katie Cooke's committee had submitted it's report, the Conservative government established the Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care on October 9, 1985. Shirley Martin, Conservative MP for Lincoln, Ontario, was appointed to chair the committee.

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[89] Debates of the House of Commons Canada, March 8, 1985, p. 2822.

[90] Ibid, p. 2823.

[91] Mahon, Rianne and Susan Phillips. "Dual-Earner Families Caught in a Liberal Welfare Regime? The Politics of Child Care Policy in Canada," in Gender and the Welfare State Restructuring: Through the Lens of Child Care. Forthcoming from Routledge Press, 2001, p. 17.

The mandate of the Martin Committee was "to report on the future of child care in Canada." The committee was asked to look at parental and non-parental care arrangements and the preferences of parents. It was also asked to considered what role the federal government should play in child care in light of the shared responsibility for child care among parents, the private sector, the voluntary sector and the provincial governments. The committee was asked to consider "the financial implications for the government of any initiatives which may be proposed including tax measures or other fiscal arrangements."[92] The government signalled what it expected from the Conservative dominated committee with the language used in its mandate. Choice in child care provision, the debt and deficit, the role of the provincial governments in social policy and education, and the private sector were all to be kept in mind when the committee was to bring forward its report. The committee travelled widely throughout the country and "heard over 6,000 pages of testimony from more than 1,000 witnesses."[93]

In February 1986, the all party committee held a press conference. Committee members, Shirley Martin (PC), Lucie Pépin (L), and Lynne MacDonald (NDP) jointly addressed the press gallery.[94] Martin stated that the committee was to

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[92]House of Commons of Canada. Sharing the Responsibility: Report of the Special Committee on Child Care. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1987, p. 93.

[93]Phillips, Susan. "Rock-A-Bye, Brian: the National Strategy on Child Care," How Ottawa Spends, 1989-90: the Buck Stops Where? Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989, p. 171.

[94]National Archives of Canada. Press Conference Held by the Special Committee on Child Care, 2000667456 CNPT 379.

study child care with the interests of "not just children of working parents, nor just the traditional family" in mind. She felt the committee's primary goal was "to help children and parents." Pépin claimed that it was "important to remove barriers to work for women" and that it was "not a luxury but a necessity" for all children. MacDonald somewhat fiercely declared, "The need and the value for child care don't need to be debated anymore and it is very important the work of this committee not simply be a duplication of the work of the group of Katie Cooke." Martin tried to soften the message by stating the report of the Cooke Committee would be part of their study but that "Government support is extremely important." She hinted that if the recommendations were too costly they could not expect the government to support them. (See Appendix III for a transcript of the press conference.)

Susan Phillips argues that the recommendations of the Martin Committee were motivated by the principles of choice, continued reliance on the income tax system as a means of helping parents directly, continued subsidies under the Canada Assistance Plan and a new act which would provide capital and operating grants to licensed facilities.[95] These were a far cry from what was intended by the Cooke Task Force and led both the Liberal and New Democrat members of the Martin Committee to submit minority dissenting opinions. New Democrat MP, Margaret Mitchell, said,

> I disagree fundamentally with both the philosophy and substance of the Committee's priorities and recommendations. I also am

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[95]Phillips, Susan, 1989, p. 171.

> profoundly disappointed at the Conservative majority's refusal to acknowledge that good child care services with extended parental leave are essential to the advancement of equality for women.[96]

This comment reflects how dramatically the rhetoric of the Conservative government had attempted to change the dialogue on child care from one of equality for women to one focussed on the well-being of the family and the child. Lucie Pépin wrote a separate minority report explaining, "I believe the Committee should have created a policy framework for effective federal leadership in the area of child care." and "I also believe that Canadians need a national program for child care similar to existing national programs supporting health and education." This was the same argument made by Ed Broadbent in the 1984 Women's Debate. Child care advocates were furious with the report of the Committee because it did not, they argued, accurately reflect the testimony heard by the committee. Child care advocate, Martha Friendly, claimed that advocates were also angry because the recommendations reduced federal leadership, failed to establish national principles or standards, and allowed for an expanded role for the Minister of Finance in social programs.[97]

On August 11, 1988, Jake Epp, Minister of Health and Welfare Canada, introduced Bill C-144, "an act to authorize payments by Canada toward the provision of child care services and to amend the Canada Assistance Plan in consequence

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[96]Special Committee on Child Care. Mitchell, Margaret, "Dissenting Opinion," Sharing the Responsibility: Report of the Special Committee on Child Care. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1987, p. 84.

[97]Friendly, 2000, p. 12.

thereof, the Canada Child Care Act." Child care advocates had been thrilled to hear that the government was going to be introducing a bill to parliament, though more than a little sceptical about the timing (just before a federal election call was expected). When they read the proposed legislation many of them were devastated and angry. It not only betrayed many of the principles for which child care advocates had been working but it also effectively put a cap on new child care funding.

The Conservative's approach illustrated three concerns:

1. Individual/family responsibility
2. Non-interference with provincial areas of jurisdiction
3. Budgetary restraint in order to address the debt and deficit.

Jake Epp introduced the legislation saying:

> We believe that a caring social policy perspective means developing an environment in which people are encouraged to help themselves and in which differing personal and community values are respected....we had to respect the rights of parents to choose the kind of care they thought best for their children. We also had to respect the existing programs and services which provincial governments had developed in response to their own past needs and circumstances...our national strategy on child care, reflects a proper balance of choice, quality and quantity.[98]

His choice of language clearly implied that the government was not about to get involved in the provision of child care the way advocates had hoped but instead were going to follow the recommendations of the Martin report - parental choice, subsidizing families through the income tax system, and reliance on existing non-profit, not-for-

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[98]Debates of the House of Commons Canada, 2nd Session, 3rd Parliament. August 11, 1988, p. 18184-6.

profit and for-profit institutions with new spaces to be left to the market. The Tories were maintaining their neo-conservative approach to governing - little direct involvement and reliance on the private sector and individuals - but they were hoping to satisfy those voters who expected them to continue to build on Canadian governments' past social democratic impulses towards social policy. Considered weak on social policy, the Mulroney Conservatives were hoping that they could sell the Child Care Act as their major piece of social policy legislation. Friendly, argues that "they wanted to pass the Child Care Act before the election was called as a centrepiece of the campaign."[99]

The Act would have removed child care funding from CAP and established it as a separate program. Linda White contends that this would have removed the perception that child care was a part of welfare programs and that the Act would have established "a fixed commitment to child care funding."[100] However, the funding was structured to limit the amount of spending within the provinces to $4 billion overall. Susan Phillips argues that this changed funding from an "open-ended cost sharing arrangement ... into the equivalent of negotiated block funding grants" This would have hurt most those provinces which were building their programs and, consequently, would

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[99]Friendly, Martha. Child Care and Canadian Federalism in the 1990's: Canary in the Coal Mine. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2000, p. 13.

[100]White, Linda. "From Ideal to Pragmatic Politics: National Child Care Advocacy Groups in the 1980s and 1990s" in Prentice, Susan. Changing Child Care: Five Decades of Child Care Advocacy and Policy in Canada. Forthcoming.

have forced them to limit their growth to their share of the $4 billion over 4 years. The Act also included funding for-profit centres. It was "silent on national objectives and delivery standards"[101] reflecting the Conservative desire for choice and a role for the market in provision of social programs.

Both NDP and Liberal MPs rose in the House to criticize the bill and the government. Bob Kaplan, Liberal, asked, "Does he [the Minister] really believe the Government has fulfilled its campaign promise by providing in the fourth year of its mandate a program that will only deliver 200,000 additional child care spaces spread out over the next four years when the need today is for a million spaces?"[102]

Vic Althouse, NDP, stated, "...under the current day care policy we would have produced more day care spaces in six years than this proposal before us will produce in seven years." Then he asked, "Will the Minister tell us why the House and Canadians should approve such a retrogressive step? Why should we be pleased with this legislation that will produce less day care spaces than the existing program?"[103] His argument was that under CAP child care spending would have increased at least as much or more likely more because CAP did not have limits on the spending in the cost sharing program.

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[101]Phillips, 1989, p. 183.

[102]Debates of the House of Commons Canada, August 11, 1988, p. 18215.

[103]Ibid, p. 18215.

Lucie Pépin, Liberal, who had been a member of the Martin Special Committee on Child Care commented:

> When the need [for child care centres] became apparent, studies were done by Rosie Abella and Katie Cook [sic], but the Conservative Government, when it took power, shelved them and set up another committee, which I was on. However, the Conservative Government has not even answered some of the recommendations made in the report of the all-party committee."[104]

The bill was debated for eleven more days in the House and on September 26 passed on third reading. The bill moved on to the Senate and was read for the first time on September 27th. On September 28th it was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Outside the House the Prime Minister accused the Liberal dominated Senate of deliberately delaying the bill.

Senator Norbert Theriault responded to the bill saying:

> I will tell you why I intend to support this bill. It is because I have been told that there will be an election and that it may be called this weekend. If an election is called this weekend, knowing this government and this Prime Minister and how they keep their promises, I would like to see this legislation passed, because, should this government be returned after the election, we would have no legislation at all and we would have to wait another four years until the next election.[105]

The 1988 federal election was called the following weekend and the bill died on the order paper. Apparently, the Canada Child Care bill was the Conservative's version of

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[104]Ibid, p. 18215.

[105]Debates of the Senate of Canada, 2nd Session, 3rd Parliament. September 27, 1988, p. 4498.

last minute action taken just before an election in an attempt to garner badly needed votes, roughly equivalent to the Liberals appointing the Cooke Task Force.

Activists had succeeded in alerting parliamentarians and the public to the drawbacks of the legislation but not in changing it. NAC and the Canadian Daycare Advocacy Association, in particular, wanted to protect child care from commercialization and objected to subsidization of for-profit child care through the tax system. They also wanted to prevent the replacement of open-ended cost-sharing by block funding which would only last for a period of seven years.[106]

Child care featured as an important campaign issue for a very short time but then became lost in the debate over the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement. Mulroney had formed closer ties to Ronald Reagan and was determined to tie Canada closer to the United States. When the election was over, Mulroney was back in the Prime Minister's Office with a dramatically reduced share of the popular vote but with a majority in the House of Commons (Seats: PC 169, Lib. 83, NDP 43) and popular vote (PC 43%, Lib. 32%, NDP 20%)[107]. Shortly afterwards, his government decided not to reintroduce the child care bill and in December 1988, Mulroney signed the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

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[106]Timpson, p. 154.

[107]Feigert, Frank. "National Results: Individual Elections" in Hugh Thorburn, ed. Party Politics in Canada, Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1996, p. 548.

Federal-provincial relations were strained by the failure of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown constitutional accords, by ongoing separatist activism in Quebec, and by the feeling of alienation in Western Canada. A national child care program would, therefore, face not only a hostile economic environment but a tough federal-provincial atmosphere. The new prime minister and his cabinet would face a difficult challenge if he were serious about bringing in new child care legislation.

Since 1984, the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney had brought about a number of changes to the Canadian welfare system, many of which were made through changes to the system of taxation and which often failed to be noticed or understood by many Canadians. Ken Battle, accusing the Mulroney government of deliberately conducting its social policy by stealth, argued that though the Tories were not the first government to behave this way "the Tories made much more use of such methods than previous governments have done and have done so in a deliberate, calculated manner that defines their style."[108] Tax changes, he argued, were often so complicated that taxpayers would need the government's accountants and tax lawyers to calculate their benefits. Gone were the days of simple tax forms that the average person could understand and easily complete themselves. Simply by making the system so complex the government disenfranchised segments of the population. Because benefits were linked to taxes, those people who, for whatever reason (low income,

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[108]Battle, Ken. "The Politics of Stealth: Child Benefits Under the Tories," in Susan Phillips' How Ottawa Spends: a More Democratic Canada...?. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1998, p. 447.

confusion, or inability), did not file an income tax form were denied those benefits. Even the government admitted that their methods were not always successful at reaching those most in need.

It was the Mulroney government which first allowed the Minister of Finance to play a key role in the shaping of social policy. This became acceptable because of the state of the economy – the 1990s depression was even worse than that of the early '80s. The government made the argument that Canadians were not prepared to accept a continuation of policies which would place the country further in debt. The populist movement which created the Reform party had as two of its main tenets - less government and lower taxes.

The 1985 budget had announced the partial deindexation of both family allowance and the Canada Pension Plan. This meant that family allowance (as well as the children's tax exemption and the refundable child tax credit) and pensions would only be increased if the rate of inflation was higher than 3% and, then, only by that amount exceeding the 3%.[109] Seniors lobbied loudly and effectively against this measure and forced the Tories to reverse themselves but they held the course on family benefits. The Conservatives introduced more tax reforms over the next several years, the most significant of which was the erosion of the principle of universality in 1989.

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[109]Increasing a benefit by only that amount over 3% caused the value of the benefit to decrease by at least 3% or the rate of inflation, eg. if inflation is 2.9% the benefit will not increase and, therefore, will actually decrease in value by 2.9% as a result of the effect of inflation on the purchasing power of the dollar.

The government introduced a clawback of family allowance for taxpayers whose net family income exceeded a $50,000.[110] This meant that these social programs now applied only to lower income families. The importance of universality in social programs is that it helps to create support among all socio-economic classes for these measures. When everyone feels that they benefit from a program, they are more likely to support it. If a particular group of taxpayers feels that their tax dollars are being spent only on another group, they may be reluctant to pay their taxes and would strenuously resist tax increases.

In 1990, the Tories announced that they were placing a ceiling on the level of growth of the federal contributions to cost-sharing programs within CAP. The three wealthiest provinces, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia would be limited to not more than 5% growth per year in the services funded by this program. CAP provided for contributions from the federal government for 50% of provincial programs for income assistance to working and non-working individuals and their families. It also provided half the cost of a wide range of social services including child care. In light of the fact that the whole country was experiencing a serious economic crisis with high levels of unemployment and rising demands on the welfare coffers, this limit meant substantial loss of revenue for these provinces. It was estimated by the federal Finance

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[110]Young, Claire. Women, Tax and Social Programs: the Gendered Impact of Funding Social Programs Through the Tax System. Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 2000, p. 32.

Department to be $2.3 billion for the three.[111] It also meant that provinces had to choose between programs and it was difficult for child care to attract the needed support at the expense of provisions to house and feed the poor.

In September of 1991, when Benoit Bouchard, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, was questioned in the House on the government's plans to comply with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (to which Canada was a signatory). His reply was a broad hint that the Mulroney government was not only going to break its promise on a national child care strategy but that its approach to children was to take a distinct turn away from child care and to the child as victim of poverty and abuse:

> We are not looking at new strategies, bearing in mind that since 1988 many problems have arisen on the issue of children, particularly in terms of child poverty and violence. Last year we put $136 million into these areas. We want to do more.
>
> At the same time, we have to take into account and put in perspective the previous comments of the President of the Treasury Board. We can only do what the fiscal reality of the country allows us to do.

He went on to say, "I hope that she [the questioner] will not ask me to raises taxes, Mr. Speaker" clearly indicating that the government was committed to a policy of low taxes and reduced benefits.[112]

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[111] Rice, James and Michael Prince. "Lowering the Safety Net and Weakening the Bonds of Nationhood: Social Policy in the Mulroney Years," in Susan D. Phillips, How Ottawa Spends: A More Democratic Canada...?, 1993-1994. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993, p. 397.

[112] Debates of the House of Commons Canada, 3rd Session, 34th Parliament, September 30, 1991, p. 2914.

It is clear that the Mulroney government did not understand, nor accept, the role child care could play in dealing with child poverty and problems of abuse. When questioned in the House in October 1991 on child care, Bouchard replied, "This government has a long-standing commitment to dealing with problems concerning children, not just daycare but also the whole problem of child sexual abuse, family violence and school drop-outs."[113] He insisted on linking all issues relating to children to dysfunction and problematizing children instead of accepting the care of all children as a normal and natural responsibility of society, including government.

In February 1992, Bouchard admitted that the federal government was no longer committed to child care: "We are very close to taking another step which will not be the child care network. We believe Canadians have other priorities today."[114] The next day, Audrey McLaughlin, leader of the NDP, asked the Prime Minister to confirm that the national child care strategy was dead, despite the fact that nothing in the budget indicated that it was. Bouchard replied,

> ...in terms of daycare or child care we had a choice as a government ...of dealing with the daycare issue on one side or trying to deal with the major problem of child poverty... This is in the action plan that we will unfold later in the month dealing with all the problems of children in society who face abuse, violence and so on... Canadians have told me, when I talk about that, that instead of continuing the question of daycare or child care, they would prefer in light of the resources we have if we deal with the question of children at risk and poverty.

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[113]Ibid, October 30, 1991, p. 4214.

[114]Ibid, February 25, 1992, p. 7591.

The government was clearly separating child care from the program intended to deal with children and women's equality simply did not figure in the question.

In the 1992 budget, the Conservative government unveiled their new Child Tax Benefit (CTB) as part of their *Brighter Futures* initiative. This program abolished family allowance, the oldest universal welfare payment program, replacing it with the refundable child tax credit and the non-refundable tax credit for dependent children.[115] The new program was not universal, being taxed back on a graduated scale as families' incomes rose. The Tories admitted that they were abandoning the principle of universality and that they were targeting the poor which led to widespread criticism.[116] Included in the CTB, there was an earned income supplement introduced as an added incentive for parents to continue to work despite low wages and few child care resources.[117]

The child care deduction was increased. This had the effect of offsetting the good vertical equity achieved by the CTB because wealthier taxpayers benefited more by being able to claim a larger portion of their child care expenses. Among child care advocates, the most profound criticism was of the Conservative government's failure to live up to its promises, made in both the 1984 and 1988 elections, to create a national child care program. The government refused to include child care as part of a strategy

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[115]Young, p. 32.

[116]Battle, p. 432.

[117]Young, p. 32.

to address the problems of child poverty and abuse. A senior policy analyst with HRDC recounted to Annis May Timpson that "the introduction of [the program] Brighter Futures ... meant that 'the focus [of federal policy] really shifted from child care to child development.'" Timpson suggests that one can see, in hindsight, that this shift "would extend well beyond this era of Conservative government."[118]

In 1989, Ed Broadbent introduced a resolution to the House of Commons calling for the end of child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. It passed the House with unanimously. The same year, Canada signed on to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which included a clause calling on all signatories to "take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child care services and facilities *for which they are eligible*." Both of these measures were consistent with a new focus that the government had adopted: a shift from child care as a gender equity tool to a means of freeing children from poverty but also from universal programs to targeted programs for poor children.

In February 1992, Benoit Bouchard, Mulroney's Minister of Health, announced that the government had no option but to abandon a national strategy on child care on the grounds of fiscal restraint. The following May, the government announced its Child Development Initiative. A senior Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) policy analyst argued that "[t]here was a shift in focus there, and

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[118]Timpson, p. 171.

although it included child development, child care just kind of dropped off the edge."[119] This completed the shift of child care from a gender equity issue to an economic issue for impoverished children and eliminated the possibility of the Conservative government undertaking a program which would fulfil the demands of child care advocates. For the remainder of its term, the Conservatives dealt only with child development not with child care.

[119]Quoted in Timpson, 2001 , p. 170.

Chapter 5 - The 1993 Election

By 1993, the Canadian national political landscape had changed dramatically. Two new federal political parties, Reform and the Bloc Québécois, were fielding candidates in large numbers and capturing the attention of the media and the voters. Both parties gained support on the basis of the antipathy Canadians were feeling toward the older parties and politics. The Reform Party had grown out of western Canada's feelings of alienation and neglect. The Bloc Québécois formed in reaction to the failure of the national government to deal effectively with Québec's demands for recognition of its special status in the Canadian confederation and the failures of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords.

The Reform Party "ran candidates in seventy-two of the eighty-six Western Canadian ridings and won 7.3 percent of the popular vote in those four provinces"[120] (approximately 2% of the popular vote nationally[121]) in the 1988 election but no seats. Deborah Grey, the first Reform MP, was elected to the House of Commons in an Alberta by-election in early 1989. In the 1993 election, the party had candidates in

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[120]Carty, R. Kenneth, William Cross and Lisa Young. Rebuilding Canadian Party Politics. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000, p. 40.

[121]McCormick, Peter. "The Reform Party of Canada: New Beginning or Dead End?" in Thorburn, Hugh, ed.. Party Politics in Canada. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1996, p. 355 and Electoral Results by Party 1867 to Date. http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/asp/PartyElect.asp?Language=E

207 ridings, running everywhere in Canada except Québec (they ran in only one of the two ridings in the Northwest Territories, 21 of 32 in Atlantic Canada and they were unable to field a candidate in one Ontario riding).[122] Reform issued a membership recruitment brochure in 1993 stating, "In Ottawa, every special interest group counts except one: Canadians." Under the heading of Social Responsibility, it claimed "We believe that Canadians have a personal and collective responsibility to care and provide for the basic needs of people who are unable to care and provide for themselves. The Reform Party believes Canadians urgently need social programs we can afford."[123] It was recruiting members by appealing to them as ordinary Canadians who were being forced to take a backseat to the interests of those who formed lobby groups with narrow aims – women and child care advocates were lumped into this category. Their brochure "56 Reasons Why You Should Support the Reform Party of Canada," from the same year, advocated reducing government spending, the superiority of the free market economy, selling of crown corporations, free trade, and opposition to "the use of federal spending powers to legislate in areas of provincial jurisdiction."[124] All of these claims alarmed child care advocates but it was their pronouncement on child care which gave the most cause for fear that even the talk of advocates' dreams was coming

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[122] 1993 Canadian Federal Election Results by Electoral District, http://esm.ubc.ca/CA93/results.html

[123] Reform Party of Canada. Party Membership Brochure, 1993.

[124] Reform Party of Canada. 56 Reasons Why You Should Support the Reform Party of Canada. 1993.

to an end: "The Reform Party believes that government should subsidize financial need, not the methods, institutions or professionals who supply childcare. Let parents decide what's right for their children."[125]

The Bloc had a much more social democratic emphasis, even though it was made up of a number of former Tories. Its raison d'être, however, was Québec and anything that would impinge on provincial rights and freedoms would find only enemies in their party. They would be happy to accept federal funding but would not be willing to accept the strings attached to the money if it meant Ottawa would exercise more control.

By 1993, Canadians were again fed up with the government. Nine years of Brian Mulroney and his government's political scandals, perceived arrogance, pro-business and pro-American stances were enough for the majority of Canadians. His government was the author of such unpopular measures as the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the failed Meech and Charlottetown Accords, and Canadian participation in the Gulf War. By the early 1990s, the Canadian economy had gone into an even deeper recession than that which had occurred in the 1980s. Though recovery had begun (Statistics Canada declared the recession over in January, 1993) the unemployment rate failed to keep pace. In

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[125]Ibid.

December, 1992, it fell to 11.5%, the lowest in three years[126] but was still high. Mulroney claimed in January that he was not prepared to give up the reins and would lead the Tories into the next election. He did admit that, "Even I, an old optimist, will acknowledge that this comeback is going to do honour to Lazarus"[127] if he was to win the election.

Debt and deficit and tax reduction were the rallying cries being heard from all the political parties at all levels of government. Even Bob Rae, NDP premier of Ontario, and British Columbia New Democrat premier, Mike Harcourt, were pushing an overhaul of government spending and limiting the increases in welfare rates.[128] Rae's government did add to subsidized child care spaces and attempted to increase the proportion of non-profit facilities. They expanded the fully- funded child care for work training participants and increased the money spent on child care by 80% over the term of their government. However, the increase in child care spaces was minimal.[129] The Ontario NDP government had turned their back on the promise they had made to voters to bring in public automobile insurance and made enemies of their

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[126]Globe and Mail, January 9, 1993, p. B1.

[127]Ibid, January 2, 1993, p. D1.

[128]On January 22, the Globe and Mail quoted Mike Harcourt as saying, "the ballooning debt will force the NDP government to cut expenditures in most areas this year...and hold spending at 3% for schools an hospitals." On February 15 and 16th the Globe and Mail featured articles on Bob Rae's awakening to the issues of deficit and debt reduction and his awareness that he was going to be forced to confront these issues with tough and unpopular measures.

[129]Tyyska, Vappu. Women, Citizenship and Canadian Child Care Policy in the 1990s. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2001, p. 9.

friends with the infamous "Rae Days." Now was not the time for any government to be promising new expensive programs.

The political terrain in 1993 was dramatically different from that of 1984. Political parties were less willing to promise new programs and Canadians' expectations were lower. Cynicism about politics had increased dramatically among voters from 1984 to 1993. In the former election, approximately 65% of people polled reported that they felt governments did not care what the people thought. By 1993 that figure had risen to 75%.[130] In the Maclean's/CTV poll, 73% of Canadians, who were polled by telephone, reported that they had their faith in politicians decrease in "the last few years."[131] It was universally acknowledged that money was an issue: 87% of survey respondents thought the economy was not changing or getting worse. Free spending governments no longer existed anywhere in the Western world and certainly not in Canada. Social responsibility had been redefined. "Individual choice" and "responsibility" were popular catch phrases. The 'politics of greed' – tax cuts at any price – were becoming evident.

The state of the economy, the constitutional disquiet, the new political parties, and the changed social policy agenda made the 1993 election very different from previous elections. However, the two main political parties that had fought the 1984 election had not changed so dramatically in the interim, except that they no longer felt it

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[130]Carty, et al, p. 28.

[131]Maclean's Magazine, January 14, 1993, p. 15.

necessary to cover their political platforms with the rhetoric of social democracy. They could see that the New Democrats were in trouble with the political polls (both Gallup and Angus-Reid) placing them at a mere 7%.[132] The popular media were highly critical of the social welfare state and very supportive of cuts to government spending and taxes. Peter C. Newman, in Maclean's, wrote, "The humanitarian and generous social welfare system that has allowed Canadians to live charmed lives ... is now history." He went on to assert that "[t]here has never been a tougher time to manage the country's finances."[133] The issues of the debt and the deficit were centre stage and Thatcherism and Reaganomics were well entrenched in the Western psyche. The main threat to the Liberals and Conservatives now came from the right. The Reform party was standing at between 17 and 19%[134] in public opinion polls. Votes were feeling ungenerous and cynical.

The popular media were fanning the flames of alarm over the state of the economy and especially the debt, deficit, and taxes. In February, Newman commented in Maclean's that social and economic times had changed forever and Canadians had to accept the disappearance of their social programs from a newly elected government or have these changes imposed by "a series of dictates from the International Monetary

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[132]The UBC-ESM 1993 Canadian Federal Election Exchange, http://esm.ubc.ca/1993cfe.html

[133]Maclean's Magazine, February 15, 1993, p. 44.

[134]The UBC-ESM 1993 Canadian Federal Election Exchange, http://esm.ubc.ca/1993cfe.html

Fund, which moves into bankrupt economies..."[135] Page one of the Globe and Mail in February had the following headline at the top of the page "Debt Crisis Looms, Study Warns." Two days later in the Report on Business, Terence Corcoran wrote an article entitled "What a Debt Crisis Might Look Like." It presented a frightening prospect in the form of a speech to the nation by a fictional Prime Minister in 1995, reminiscent of H.G. Wells' War of the Worlds. The lead in a July 5th article in Maclean's was "Our place of shame, just behind Burundi: our debt ratio means that Canada is worse off than such economic giants as Poland, Ghana and Ethiopia." Jeffrey Simpson, editorialized that even the New Democrats were prepared to acknowledge the need to address the debt and the deficit by quoting an article written by Audrey McLaughlin, federal New Democrat Leader, in the Whitehorse Star. She had written: "There's no doubt that the debt is a very real problem" In view of this kind of media attention, it is hardly surprising that Canadians would report to pollsters that the economy was their number one issue (81% of voters asked reported economic issues as the most important in 1993; compared to 70% in 1984). Only 5% of 1993 voters cited social issues, down from 11% in the 1984 election.[136]

Child care and most other social policy issues were overshadowed by economic issues which dominated the election and the election platforms of the major

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[135]Maclean's Magazine, February 15, 1993, p. 44.

[136]Pammett, Jon. "Analyzing Voting Behaviour in Canada: the Case of the 1993 Election," in Thorburn, Hugh. Party Politics in Canada. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1996, p. 588.

parties. All of the parties focussed mainly on issues of debt and deficit reduction.[137] The Liberals and New Democrats, in particular, had lengthy and detailed platform documents. The Liberals published their platform, entitled Creating Opportunity: the Liberal Plan for Canada, but nicknamed The Redbook for the colour of its cover. Chrétien brandished The Redbook during speeches on election stops throughout his countrywide tour. The Liberals promised to get rid of the immensely unpopular GST and to reconsider the trade agreements with the U.S. They made enormous mileage by playing up the disfavour in which the Conservatives found themselves.[138] Even though the leadership of that party had changed and they had chosen their first female leader, Kim Campbell, who promised to "do things differently,"[139] few Canadians were prepared to believe them.

The New Democrats broke with custom by preparing and releasing their 60-page election platform document in February even before an election had been announced. In another innovation, they submitted their plan to an independent business consultant for criticism on its viability. Informetrica Limited gave the plan a passing

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[137]The Bloc, a new party in 1993, focussed mainly on Québec voters and Québec issues and was without a pan-Canadian platform so will not be considered in this discussion.

[138]In a major, pre-election speech in January of 1993, Chrétien began the battle by saying,"...this government has persisted in proposing wrong and false choices based on wrong and false ideas... The integrity of government has taken a beating. Honesty and principle have been replaced by... cynical politics." He kept up this theme throughout the campaign. (Reported in The Globe and Mail, January 28, 1993, p. A23.)

[139]Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. "Building Trust Key to Victory," Changing Politics Together: Campbell Express. Ottawa: Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, 1993.

grade and predicted that the plan "...will shift people's perceptions of the NDP". In preparation of the platform, Audrey McLaughlin had met with numerous business leaders and an "NDP insider" was quoted as admitting that "in principle, it's small-l liberal economic policy."[140]

The Liberals' 120 page Redbook included a 20-point plan for reorganizing the country after the election. Maclean's Magazine claimed the "The Liberal platform charts a cautious middle course between the party's activist inclinations and the restraint necessitated by a debt - ridden federal treasury."[141] It also claimed that the business leaders asked to assess the plan were dissatisfied with how far the plan went in terms of both economic issues and social policy. In the case of the former, it did not go far enough and in terms of social policy it was too generous. However, the Liberals social policy came with enough provisos as to make it easy for a Chrétien government to wiggle out of almost all their promises. The Liberals accused the Conservative government of having "the tendency to focus obsessively on one problem, such as the deficit or inflation, without understanding or caring about the consequences of their policies on other areas..."[142] This gave them the opportunity to claim that some exigency of the economy or public will forced them to change direction or withdraw

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[140]The Globe and Mail, February 24, 1993, p. A11.

[141]Maclean's Magazine, September 27, 1993, p. 16.

[142]Liberal Party of Canada. Creating Opportunity: the Liberal Plan for Canada. Ottawa: Liberal Party of Canada, 1993, p. 10.

from a program they had proposed. The Redbook also gave Canadians reasons to be hopeful that the Liberals would change the direction of government away from simply cutting and more towards innovation:

> Liberals, unlike Conservatives, fundamentally believe that government can be a force for good in society. Economic growth is not a matter for market forces alone. Jobs, health care, a safe and sustainable environment, equality for women and men, care for the very young and the aged, and the alleviation of poverty are societal issues that cannot be addressed simply by having each individual aggressively pursue immediate, narrow self-interest.[143]

These statements reflect an earlier time in the Liberal Party history when the party's focus was more to the left and social welfare was a priority. This was one of those social democratic impulses the party was not yet comfortable giving up. They stopped short, however, of arguing that these matters are a societal responsibility and hinted that the government might consider allowing the private sector into some of the social programs of which Canadians were so proud:

> As a government we intend to innovate, to look at old problems with fresh eyes. We will not automatically accept the usual remedies for such seemingly intractable problems as stubbornly high unemployment rates or ever-increasing health care costs. We intend to introduce a number of measures that will challenge the conventional thinking on these and other issues....we are mindful of the serious financial constraints facing us... We know that we cannot spend our way out of the crisis we face. [One way is] the notion of partnership with all sectors of society...we can reorganize our total national resources, public and private, not only to be more efficient but to take advantage of strategic economic and social opportunities[144]

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[143]Ibid, p. 11.

[144]Ibid, p. 11.

Child care advocates were given reason to hope:

> ...we wish to focus our efforts on leverage points. By concentrating some of our resources on early childhood, for example, we can achieve a significant multiplier effect in later savings in the health and social service sector as those children reach adulthood.[145]

The use of the phrase, "for example," however, released the party from a strict commitment. The platform went on to promise more in the section devoted to child care.[146] It acknowledged that families "need a support system that enables parents to participate fully in the economic life of the country." The promise was: "A Liberal government, working with the provinces, will implement a realistic and fiscally responsible program to increase the number of child care spaces in Canada. In each year following a year of 3 percent economic growth, a Liberal government will create 50,000 new child care spaces to a total of 150,000."[147] They clearly left themselves escape clauses, "following a year of 3 percent economic growth" and later, "A Liberal government, *if it can obtain the agreement of the province...*" The document veered away from child care advocates' ideals by saying: "The objective of the Liberal policy on child care is to create genuine choices for parents by encouraging the development of regulated child care alternatives." They also hinted at support for for-profit child

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[145]Ibid, p. 12.

[146]Ibid, p. 38.

[147]The New Democrats cited the Health and Welfare Canada National Child Care Information Centre, to point out that in 1988, 2.7 million children needed some form of care and only 320,000 regulated spaces were available. Adding the Liberals promised 150,000 new spaces would still leave 2.23 million children in unregulated care at the end of 1996, if all the conditions were met.

care by suggesting that "quality standards [could be] monitored by government or an authorized agency" and "[a] Liberal government will also work with the provinces and the business community to identify appropriate incentives for the creation and funding of child care spaces in the workplace."[148]

New Democrats remained faithful to their previous platform promises. They promised a national child care program that would "double the number of child care spaces over the next Parliament."[149] The party insisted that "[c]hild care and full employment go hand in hand. Most parents today must work outside the home. Quality, affordable child care is not a luxury – it's a vital necessity." This echoed the report of the Abella Commission Report. The NDP platform document also spoke of child care as a parent's responsibility (not just a mother's) and as an anti-poverty measure, a means to increase the productivity of parent-workers and a child development strategy. They argued that it was a cost effective job strategy because "75 per cent of a child care facility's budget is typically dedicated to salaries."[150] It recognized social reproduction as a societal and governmental responsibility.

The Progressive Conservative Party campaign literature did not have a section specifically on child care but included it within the section, Investing in Canadians. This

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[148]Ibid, p. 40.

[149]New Democratic Party of Canada. Canada Works When Canadians Work: a Strategy for Full Employment. Ottawa: The New Democratic Party of Canada, 1993, p. 11.

[150]New Democratic Party of Canada. Strategy for a Full Employment Economy: a Jobs Plan for Canada From Canada's New Democrats. Ottawa: The New Democratic Party of Canada, 1993, p.12.

was a marked departure from the 1984 platform. The Campbell Conservatives favoured specifically targeting children at risk and helping community organization: "...the government's Brighter Futures program has a Community Action Program to help local groups help children at risk. We will sign agreements with provinces who have not yet signed onto [this program], so that children at risk across Canada can have access to this program immediately." They favoured using the taxation system to help parents afford child care and bundled it in with the Learning Incentives Program promised to:

> For the first time, make part-time students eligible for a child care expense deduction to help pay for their child care costs; and
>
> Allow single parents to claim a child care expense deduction against all income, including UI and child support income, not just income earned from employment.[151]

There is no other mention of child care, however, there was at least as much written on toughening the Young Offenders Act. The document which was entitled, Making Government Work for Canada: a Taxpayer's Agenda, also made nine promises to reduce the debt and the deficit and eight promises to bring in no new taxes and to work toward reducing the existing ones. The platform was full of references to personal responsibility, choice, and opportunity. Kim Campbell, the party leader, was unabashedly neo-liberal in her political perspective.

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[151] Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. Making Government Work for Canada: a Taxpayer's Agenda. Ottawa: Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, 1993, p. 12.

The Reform Party platform was based on a promise of real change and played on the discontent and distrust Canadian were feeling towards politicians in general and the Mulroney Conservatives in particular. They spoke of decreasing the size of the government, increasing democracy through referenda and recall. In Western Canada, they spoke to the feelings of widespread alienation. Fewer and lower taxes was their clarion call.

The Leaders debate took place on October 4th and included Jean Chrétien, Liberal leader, Kim Campbell, Prime Minister and PC leader, Preston Manning, leader of the Reform Party, Audrey McLaughlin, NDP, and Lucien Bouchard, Bloc Québécois. It was the first time "ordinary Canadians" were included in the audience and allowed to ask the leaders questions. The first question, directed to all the leaders, reflected the country's general mood of distrust:

> At the end of the Liberal government we had 1.5 million Canadians unemployed. On the question of jobs, in 1984, Brian Mulroney campaigned on jobs, jobs, jobs. Nine years later we have 1.6 million unemployed. Please tell Canadians why they should trust any of your promises now?[152]

All the leaders were questioned on the deficit, jobs, social programs, the economy, medicare in particular and social programs in general, and the political unity of Canada.

Only Audrey McLaughlin mentioned child care. She was asked how she would avoid having to cut social programs and where she would find the funds to pay

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[152]CBC Television. The 1993 Leaders' Debate. Ottawa: CBC TV, 1993. National Archives of Canada, acc. #1993-0255, item #215724, consult #9812-0047.

for them. Her reply was, "There was a recent study that said for every dollar that we invest in a child in need, we save $5.50 later on in policing costs and other social services." Even the NDP leader spoke of child care within the context of poverty and child development. McLaughlin was also asked a question by a member of the audience on the use of the tax system as a means of supporting stay at home parents. Her response was to refer to her party's platform which promised to double the child care spaces and to continue, "I think we really do have to value the work of women and to say 'Yes, we need to look at that' and to see that that is reflected in our tax structure...for far too long the work of women has been undervalued." None of the other leaders chose to speak to the issue.

The Liberals went on to win a sizeable majority in a vastly different House. The separatist Bloc Québécois formed Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the Conservatives were all but wiped out, the New Democrats were reduced to the fewest number of seats they had ever had, and Reform garnered 52 seats. Political commentators have found it difficult to explain the sea change that occurred in Canadians voting patterns but one thing was certain – the agenda had moved to the right. Edward Greenspon argued in the Globe and Mail that the Liberal victory was "due more to the collapse of the NDP vote and the damage the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois did to the Conservatives" than an embracing of the Liberals.[153]

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[153]Greenspon, Edward. "These Liberals are Different," The Globe and Mail, October 28, 1993, p. A1.

Approximately 90% of the popular vote was for right of centre parties (assuming that the Liberals qualify as a right of centre party).[154] Bashevkin provides an apt description of the results: "the 1993 elections produced a cacophonous opposition, one with pronounced devolutionist, anti-federal primacy and, in English Canada, anti-welfare state and anti-interventionist leanings."[155] Reform was now the opposition party pushing the parliamentary debates and challenging the government in Question Period. The social democratic NDP was reduced to just nine seats and had lost official party status.

The shift to the right was now reflected in the composition of the House. The Reform Party as the only sizeable opposition party interested in national issues drove the political discourse in parliamentary debates. Economic issues dominated the federal stage and child care was gradually marginalised as a special interests issue.

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[154]Library of Parliament. Electoral Results by Party: 1867 to Date. http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/asp/PartyElect.asp?Language=E

[155]Bashevkin, Sylvia. "Rethinking Retrenchment: North American Social Policy during the Early Clinton and Chrétien Years," Canadian Journal of Political Science, March 2000, p. 29.

Chapter 6 - The Intervening Years

The issue of child care had been part of the 1993 Liberal Party platform partly because Chaviva Hosek, former president of NAC (1984-1986) and an important policy advisor to Jean Chrétien, after 1990, had been asked by the party to co-chair the platform committee with Paul Martin (future Minister of Finance). Hosek understood child care and its importance and was closely linked to members of the child care movement. Timpson argues that Hosek realized that the definition of child care as a gender equity issue was holding it back and so she "persuaded the Liberal Party to include child care in the Red Book by arguing that it represented an investment in Canada's youngest citizens, who, in time, would form Canada's workforce."[156] She was credited with writing the 1993 Redbook (and subsequent Redbooks for the 1997 and 2000 elections).[157] The Liberal Party had been sharply critical of the Conservative government's child care record while in opposition.[158] The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada with "the support of NAC, the labour movement, the National

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[156]Timpson, p. 186.

[157] Csillag, Ron. "Hosek heads scientific research body" in The Canadian Jewish News, March 1, 2001, http://www.cjnews.com/pastissues/01/mar1-01/front3.asp

[158]Bach, Sandra and Susan Phillips. "Constructing a New Social Union: Child Care Beyond Infancy?" in G. Swimmer, ed., How Ottawa Spends, 1997-1998: Seeing Red: a Liberal Report Card. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1998, p. 238.

Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Native Women's Association of Canada" had lobbied all the parties to "put the social democratic-feminist alternative back on the agenda."[159] Paul Martin, on the other hand, was instrumental in the Liberals abandonment of their promises for social policy improvements within two years of their election victory. The two co-chairs were symbolic of the Liberal Party's two-headed approach to social policy. One head, Hosek, attempted to instill social democratic principles in the Party. The other head, Martin, was pushing the agenda of the Party toward fiscal and economic conservatism. He was a strong advocate of cutting social programs and privatizing public institutions. By 1995, Martin was the victor.

The policy on child care included in the Liberal platform gave child care advocates new reason to hope that the new government would bring child care back from the brink. Sandra Bach and Susan Phillips argue that "fulfilment of [the Liberal's 1993 Redbook commitments] would have marked a significantly increased federal role in the shaping and development of regulated child care, amounting to a 41 percent increase in the number of regulated spaces."[160] But, more importantly, it would have been an acknowledgement that child care was a societal and a federal governmental responsibility. Certainly, the Redbook's focus on getting Canadians working again and

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[159]Ibid, p. 404.

[160]Bach, Sandra and Susan Phillips, p. 235.

the statement that "the availability of quality child care is an economic issue,"[161] made it reasonable to think that the new government would reverse the Conservative's course on child care. Child care advocates, Bach and Phillips argue, viewed the Liberal's promise as a good start. In its first two years in office, the Government gave every indication that they would carry through on their promise. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister for Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) in the first Chrétien government, appeared to be personally committed to the idea and worked over the next two years to reach an agreement with the provinces on child care.[162] In the 1994 budget, the government "allocated the first two years of child care federal funding: $120 million for the fiscal year 1995-96 and $240 million for 1996-97."[163] Bureaucrats from HRDC arranged to meet with representatives of the provinces and began the process of negotiating a way to implement the Liberal's election promise.

At the same time, the government announced a review of all social programs in January 1994. Lloyd Axworthy, as Minister of Human Resources Development introduced a motion in parliament: "[t]hat the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development be directed to consult broadly, to analyse and to make recommendations regarding the modernization and restructuring of Canada's social security system, with

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[161]Liberal Party of Canada, 1993, p. 38.

[162]When Lloyd Axworthy retired from federal politics in December 2000, he said in an interview with Jason Moskovitch on CBC Radio, ""My biggest regret is that we weren't able to get agreement on a child care program." (Voices for Child Care, Child Care Resources and Research Unit.)

[163]Bach and Phillips, p. 239.

particular reference to the needs of families with children, youth and working age adults..."[164] In February, the first public hearings were held. Also in February, a Ministerial Task Force was assembled to advise the minister on social policy reform.[165] In March, the Standing Committee issued its interim report. In October 1994, Axworthy issued Agenda: Jobs and Growth. Improving Social Security in Canada: a Discussion Paper. The paper explained that the review was designed to be a part of the government's "jobs and growth agenda" and to "give Canadians an opportunity to participate in the shaping of a crucial element of that agenda – the rebuilding of our social security system."[166] In his introduction, Axworthy warned that "[t]he status quo is not good enough. Defending special interests will not work." Surprisingly, the Discussion Paper included a section on "[m]eeting the needs of working parents" which was subdivided into child care and flexible work arrangements. This put child care in the context of enabling parents to work but it also included the idea of child care as an important aid to development for children at risk and a source of employment for care providers. Women's equity was conspicuously absent. The review also released a supplementary paper entitled Child Care and Development. This argued that

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[164]Debates of the House of Commons Canada, January 31, 1994, p.

[165]Jennissen, Therese. "The Federal Social Security Review, Process and Related Events (December 1993-June 1995): a Chronology," in Pulkingham, Jane and Gordon Ternowetsky, eds. Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s, Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1996, p. 30.

[166]Human Resources Development Canada. Agenda: Jobs and Growth. Improving Social Security in Canada: A Discussion Paper. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994, p. 5.

"strengthening child care services will be an important consideration for all levels of government and the public in the reform of social security systems."[167]

Concurrently, however, the Department of Finance was finding ways to cut the federal deficit. The 1994 budget "announced that CAP entitlements would be frozen at their 1994-95 levels pending the outcome of the social security reform" and "that in 1996-97, the combined entitlements of CAP and Established Program Funding - Post Secondary Education, or their successor programs, are to be no higher after reform than they were in 1993-94."[168] Paul Martin made a presentation to the House Standing Committee on Finance in October, 1994, in which he said, "The government is committed to reverse Canada's fiscal decline, first by achieving the announced target of reducing the deficit to no more than 3% of GDP by fiscal year 1997/97" and "by getting government right." He vowed that the government's promise to meet "its fiscal targets – and to meet them on time – is ironclad."[169]

On February 6, 1995 the Standing Committee on HRDC released its final report on Canada's social programs, entitled Security, Opportunities and Fairness: Canadians Renewing Their Social Programs. The Standing Committee on Human

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[167]Human Resources Development Canada. Improving Social Security in Canada. Child Care and Development: a Supplementary Paper. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994, p. 1.

[168]Department of Finance. Creating a Healthy Fiscal Climate: the Economic and Fiscal Update. Ottawa: Department of Finance Canada, 1994., p. 74.

[169]Martin, Paul. A New Framework for Economic Policy: a Presentation by the Honourable Paul Martin, P.C, M.P., to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. Ottawa: Department of Finance, 1994, p. 72 and 87.

Resources report was again a near-complete fulfilment of child care advocates and feminists dreams. The Committee endorsed "the federal government's commitment to increased child care funding." Among its recommendation, the Committee "stressed the need for gender analysis in the evaluation of ideas for improving Canada's social programs."[170] It declared: "Since most of the work of caring for Canada's children is performed by women, adequate child care is absolutely essential to provide women with the choices and flexibility they need to live and work as full and equal participants in Canadian society." Not since the Cooke Report had the role of child care in women's lives been so clearly articulated. The report recommended that the federal government, in cooperation with the provinces, develop a new means of funding child care outside of CAP and develop a set of standards "appropriate to high quality child care." The recommendations (see Appendix IV) spoke of child care as a tool for child development and the need to properly value the work of child care workers. The Committee recommended that the "federal-provincial-territorial discussions...serve as the groundwork for establishing a strengthened and improved child care system in Canada."[171] However, the Minister of Human Resources also announced the postponement of the reform of social programs until after the 1995 budget. This

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[170]Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. Security, Opportunities and Fairness: Canadians Renewing Their Social Programs. Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1995, p. 73-74.

[171]Ibid, p. 73-74.

foreshadowed the changes which were to come as a result of the federal budget and reflected the priorities of the government.

On February 27, 1995, Paul Martin, the Minister of Finance, delivered his 1995 budget speech, which brought in "the most profound changes to social policy in Canada since the 1990s."[172] If the 1993 election was a "sea-change" of the Canadian political landscape, the 1995 budget was the consolidation of that change. The National Council of Welfare called it "a giant step backward in Canadian social policy."[173] The Council's report, The 1995 Budget and Block Funding, claimed the budget was turning the clock back to the 1950s, and the Finance minister boasted in Budget 1995 that by 1996-97 Canada would have the largest surplus relative to GDP since 1951-52. The Minister abolished the Canada Assistance Plan and Established Programs Funding and rolled them into the new Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).[174] The 1995 budget spelled out the terms:

> The new transfer will end the intrusiveness of previous cost-sharing arrangements and will reduce long-time irritants:
>
> - Provinces will no longer be subject to rules stipulating which expenditures are eligible for cost sharing or not.

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[172]Friendly, Martha and Mab Oloman. "Child Care at the Centre: Child Care on the Social, Economic and Political Agenda in the 1990s" in Pulkingham, Jane and Gordon Ternowetsky, eds. Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s, Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1996, p. 281.

[173]National Council of Welfare. The 1995 Budget and Block Funding. Ottawa: National Council of Welfare, 1995, p. 1.

[174]Originally called simply the Canada Social Transfer, it was later expanded to be called the Canada Health and Social Transfer.

- Provinces will be free to pursue their own innovative approaches to social security reform.
- The expense of administering cost sharing will be eliminated.
- Federal expenditures will no longer be driven by provincial decisions on how, and to whom, to provide social assistance and social services.[175]

The budget reduced federal transfers to the provinces by $7 billion in the first two years.[176] The new CHST carried with it no obligation as to how the provinces were to spend the reduced federal dollars. Consequently, child care was forced to compete for funding with all the other provincially delivered social programs. The money allocated for child care in the 1994 budget disappeared. Bach and Phillips report that by 1997 "the federal government [spending] was approximately one-third less ($105 million) on child care services for the general population than it was in 1993; and roughly $274 million less than it had promised in the Red Book."[177]

Health care, education, and social programs all competing for shrinking federal monies and the provinces were left with "the difficult allocative decisions."[178] However, the new CHST, gave the provinces greater control of social programs and a bigger role in the lives of Canadians because their difficult decisions also meant that they

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[175]Finance Canada. "The Canada Social Transfer," Budget 1995 Fact Sheets - 10. http://www.fin.gc.ca/budget95/facte/FACT_10e.html.

[176]Friendly, Martha and Mab Oloman., p. 281.

[177]Bach and Phillips, 1997, p. 247.

[178]Silver, Susan. "The Struggle for National Standards: Lessons from the Federal Role in Health Care," in Pulkingham, Jane and Gordon Ternowetsky, eds. Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s, Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1996, p. 67.

determined the nature of the Canadians' interactions with government. As Dalton Camp argues, "Canada's social security system has long represented confirmation of a social contract between Canadians and their federal government...these measure have defined the country."[179] After the creation of the CHST, the federal government was no longer directing how social programs, except Medicare, were to be funded and because of the deep cuts, provinces were left with federally initiated programs they could no longer afford. Even the threat of federal sanctions to provincial allocations was weakened. The 1995 budget speech recognized that social programs were the responsibility of the provinces and "end[ed] the intrusiveness of previous cost-sharing arrangements."[180] The Liberals were committed to the devolution of services to the provinces as a means of "blame avoidance." They were shifting the blame for cuts to programs and withdrawal of services from their government to their provincial counterparts.

The bill to change the delivery of federal transfer payments (Bill C-76) passed the House on June 21 and received Royal Assent on June 22.[181] The fact that the Minister of Finance was able to win the day showed how far the domination of his ministry had come to extend over the entire machinery of government. The

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[179]Camp, Dalton. Quoted by Pat Armstrong in "The Welfare State as History," in Raymond Blake, Penny Bryden and Frank Strain, eds. The Welfare State in Canada: Past, Present and Future. Concord, ON.: Irwin Publishing, 1997, p. 61.

[180]Department of Finance, Budget 1995, p. 21.

[181]Jennisen, p. 32.

recommendations of the social security review were not implemented. Consequently, the provinces were forced to cut funding to all their social programs, including child care.

The timing of the release and recommendations of the Standing Committee on HRDC and the federal budget are a good example of the schizophrenic personality of Canadian governments. By the one hand, Canadians were being offered hope for improved services while the other hand was snatching away the money to deliver them. The Liberals marched out the rhetoric of rescuing Canadians' precious social programs while others in the same government were plotting for their demise.

The Minister of Human Resources Development tried again in late 1995 to reach an agreement with the provinces on child care. On December 13th, Minister Axworthy held a press conference to announce an offer to the provinces of $630 million over the next three to five years to increase the number of child care spaces. He told his provincial counterparts that he had little more than a month to hear from them that they were interested in pursuing this program. Eight provinces expressed an interest in pursuing an agreement. However, early in 1996, Axworthy was replaced by Doug Young (a man who would go on to earn a reputation for cuts to Unemployment Insurance). Shortly thereafter, the Minister announced that the federal government had been unable to reach an agreement with the provinces because of lack of interest from the provinces. This angered child care advocates who insisted that it was not disinterest on the part of the provinces but reluctance on the part of the federal government for

two reasons: pressure against a new, expensive program from the Department of Finance and fear of interfering in provincial jurisdiction.

In 1995, the Québec referendum came very close to being a victory for the separatist forces in Québec (50.58% NO and 49.42% YES[182]). Canadians and, in particular, federal politicians were badly shaken by the close call. Chrétien was blamed by the other federal party's for the near disaster. In the lead up to the referendum, the federal government had trod carefully to avoid any actions that could be construed by Québécois as impinging on provincial turf. Chrétien had refrained from speaking out on the question of Québec separation until late in the referendum campaign, fearing the perception of interfering. It has been argued that the referendum was one of the reasons the Chrétien government was slow to make the changes they promised to social programs in the 1993 election.[183] The strength of the separatist Bloc in Québec and the efforts of provincial premiers, Harris (Ontario) and Klein (Alberta), to convince Québec that they had a concert of interests in working together to reshape the Canadian confederation [184] in the run-up to the Québec vote were powerful influences on the Chrétien government to enter into a new federal-provincial arrangement.

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[182]Gouvernement du Québec. Tableau synoptique des résultats du recensement des votes. http://www.dgeq.qc.ca/information/referendum/refe_1995/resu-95a.html

[183]Bach and Phillips, p. 242.

[184]Timpson, p. 198.

The provinces were keen to gather more control over social programs. They established their own Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal at the 1995 Annual Premiers' Conference in St. John's. With the exception of Québec, all the provinces participated in its work.[185] The Council sent their report to the Prime Minister in March, 1996, asking him to discuss it with them at the upcoming First Ministers Conference. From this conference came the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council on Social Policy renewal. The First Ministers "directed it to guide the social union initiative." The primary objective of the social union initiative was "to reform and renew Canada's system of social services and to reassure Canadians that their pan-Canadian social programs are strong and secure."[186]

Their first initiative was the National Children's Agenda. In January 1997, the F-P-T Council on Social Policy Renewal asked the provinces and the federal government to begin work towards the National Children's Agenda. At the Annual Premiers' Conference in August, the Premiers expressed "strong support" for developing an NCA. At their meeting in December, 1997, the First Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to new cooperative approaches to ensure child well-being. The speech from the throne, September 23, 1997 announced the National Children's

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[185]Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. News Release: Premiers Release Report of the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal. Saint John's: Executive Council, March 28, 1996, http://www.gov.nf.ca/releases/1996/exec/0328n03.htm

[186]Government of Canada. Social Union: Main Menu. http://socialunion.gc.ca/menu_e.html

Agenda. In effect this agreement moved the Canadian political agenda further toward targeted programs for poor and disadvantaged children and families and further away from universal programs. The other powerful effect of these discussions was to tie the federal government's hands in initiating new social programs. The federal government required the agreement of a majority of the provinces for any programs which involved areas of provincial jurisdiction, such as social programs including child care.

On February 4th , 1999, the federal government and nine provincial governments signed the Social Union Framework Agreement. Québec refrained. The agreement was defined as "the umbrella under which governments will concentrate their efforts to renew and modernize Canadian social policy." It established four main principles which guide all agreements:

1. All Canadians are equal
2. All programs are to ensure access for all Canadians, wherever they live or move in Canada, to essential social programs and services of reasonably comparable quality and promised to respect the principles of medicare
3. Ensure adequate, affordable, stable and sustainable funding for social programs
4. Guarantee that nothing in this agreement abrogates or derogates from any Aboriginal, treaty or other rights of Aboriginal peoples including self-government[187]

Québec had refused to be involved in the new Social Union and steered its own course until 1999. At that time, Premier Bouchard announced that he would take

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[187]Government of Canada and the Governments of the Provinces and Territories. A Framework to Improve the Social Union for Canadians, signed February 4, 1999. http://socialunion.gc.ca/news/020499_e.html

part in negotiations but he refused to sign the 1999 agreement. In 1997, the Québec government made the decision to institute a new $5/day child care program on their own. It was first offered for five year olds and, each year thereafter, the age of attendance would be lowered until in 2001 all children would be included. Since 1997, approximately 12,000 spaces have been created each year. The government is predicting 175,000 spaces by 2005.[188] All spaces are in licensed, provincially funded and regulated facilities. All families in need of child care are eligible whether working or not. Families on social assistance and not in the workforce may access up to 23.5 hours per week at no cost. As well, some low income parents are eligible for an additional fee reduction of $3/day. At the same time, the Québec government negotiated a collective agreement with their child care workers to increase their salaries by 35-40%. The province also ended subsidies to commercial child care operation and for profit centres are slowly being eliminated from the province.

A Party which portrayed itself as a saviour of Canada's social programs had in fact cut them more deeply and changed them more profoundly than any previous government. Their promises on child care remained unfulfilled and the potential of a national child care program became even more remote.

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[188]Tougas, Jocelyne. "What the Rest of Canada Can Learn From Quebec," http://www.childcarecanada.org/resources/issues/quebec.html

Chapter 7 - The 2000 Election

The most striking characteristics of the 2000 federal election was the lack of discussion of issues of substance and the number of personal attacks by the leaders on one another.[189] From the beginning of the campaign the Liberals portrayed the election as a choice between "two crystal clear alternatives."[190] They virtually ignored the Conservatives and the NDP, choosing instead to focus their attacks on the Canadian Alliance in most of Canada and the Bloc Québécois in Québec. From the beginning of the campaign the media determined, that the parties to watch were the Alliance and the Liberals (and again the Bloc in Québec).[191] Liberal leader, Jean Chrétien, repeatedly

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[189]Web pages were an important feature in this election and in the commentary on the election in the post-election period. On the Liberal Party web page under "What's New" the party has listed press releases from the election period (October 22-November 27). These included 25 releases on policy; 41 that were attacks on Stockwell Day or the Alliance; 8 attacks on Gilles Duceppe or the Bloc; 1 on Alexa McDonough or the NDP; and 1 on Joe Clark or the PCs. The Canadian Alliance had a similar page entitled "What's Hot". There were 12 press releases on policy; 25 were statements attacking Jean Chrétien or the Liberals; none on Gilles Duceppe or the Bloc; one on McDonough and her party; and one on Clark and the PCs.

[190]From the Prime Minister's speech announcing the election, CBC Newsworld website, http://cbc.ca/cgi-bin/templates/electionview.cgi?/news/2000/10/22/call001022

[191]In the coverage of the election call, the CBC website spoke only of the Liberals, Alliance and Bloc, "Chrétien visited his riding office in Shawinigan Sunday afternoon. In a speech to about 400 supporters, he said the BQ's days are numbered and that people in Quebec are tired of talking about separation." and "The Liberals currently hold 101 of the [Ontario's] 103 ridings. The Alliance Party is hoping to pick up some of those seats." The Globe and Mail coverage of the announcement included mention of all five official parties but interpreted Mr. Chrétien's comment on a choice between two alternatives this way: "He said the election will be a two-party race between the Liberals and the Alliance." (http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/RTGAMArticleHTMLTemplate?tf=tgam/realtime/fullstory_Election.html&cf=tgam/realtime/config-neutral&slug=wmain_election&date=20001022).

accused Stockwell Day, leader of the opposition Canadian Alliance, of having a secret agenda. Day and the Alliance candidates charged Chrétien with: being arrogant and cynical, lying to the Canadian people about the state of the countries health care system and his involvement in federal government loans, and about how the Liberals would use the federal budget surplus. Gilles Duceppe discussed issues but only those concerned with Québec. In the Leaders debate, Duceppe had the enviable position of being able to say that his only issue was Québec. (When asked if he would ally himself with Stockwell Day to defeat a minority Liberal government, he replied, "We will look at each issue on its own value. If it is good for Québec, we'll support it. If it's not good for Québec, we will not support it." [192])

Alexa McDonough and the NDP chose to make health care the focus of their campaign and pounded away at it at every opportunity. Their campaign featured polished television ads on disappearing hospital services but the Party was virtually ignored by the media. In a campaign speech, McDonough spoke of "how out of touch Chrétien and Day are with the reality of women's lives." She argued that there are "very few women...that would want big tax cuts if they knew it was at the expense of women who desperately need health care, who desperately need child care..."[193] In

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[192]Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The Leaders Debate - November 9th, 2000. http://cbc.ca/election2000/smil/debate/debate_eng.smil

[193]Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. News report on a speech by Alexa McDonough to a women's breakfast. http://cbc.ca/clips/ram-audio/parry_hr001106.ram

the debate, McDonough returned repeatedly to tax cuts and the use of the surplus. She criticized Chrétien for gutting social programs and Day for misleading Canadians about his party's policy intentions. She spoke of broken election promises by the Liberals yet she never mentioned the promises of a national child care program that had been made and broken by both the Liberals and the Conservatives.

Joe Clark was the surprise in the two debates. He was recognized as having been effective and statesman-like. His introductory message in the Leaders debate was directed at Jean Chrétien and Stockwell Day and argued that the quality of the leaders was the issue in the election. His performance in the debates was too little too late for his party. Though the Conservatives improved their position in the polls in the last few days of the campaign, it was not enough to make substantial gains in the number of seats.

In the debate, Chrétien reiterated his claim that the election was a clear choice between two visions of Canada. He attempted to portray himself and his party as the defender of Canada's social programs and a strong federal government. However, he and the other leaders only spoke of children in relation to poverty and early childhood development. Child care was only briefly mentioned by McDonough.

Chrétien was questioned on the cynicism of calling an election, when two of the leaders had just been elected to Parliament in by-elections and before the end of the Liberal mandate. He responded that the election was a question of what to do with the surplus and a debate about the vision of the country. He insisted that voters were being

asked to direct the government on what should be done with the surplus. Nothing was volunteered on a new child care program.

The media and voters alike criticized the leaders' for the unpleasantness of their conduct in the debate – the bitter exchanges, shouting, interrupting, and the numerous personal attacks. Chrétien was even able to elicit sympathy from some Canadians because there were times all the other leaders appeared attack him at once.

The New Democrats were again the only party to promise a national child care program in their party platform. They promised to:

> Work with provincial and territorial governments to create a national plan for child care and early childhood education. The National Early Years Fund will be fully funded at $3.5 billion a year by 2004 and be based on five principles:
> - comprehensive, covering pre- and post-natal care, early learning and child care, parental supports of parents both at home and in the labour market
> - integrated, meaning it will be available across education, social and health services
> - accessible to all Canadians regardless of barriers, location, ability or cost
> - quality of services ensured by strong standards
> - non-profit.[194]

The Liberals promised to "invest in the social fabric" of Canada, particularly in "...areas which reflect the responsibility Canadians feel toward one another."[195] This statement was so vague as to allow them to interpret it however they pleased. At the

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[194]New Democratic Party of Canada. NDP Commitment to Canadians. 2000, http://www.ndp.ca/platform/default.asp?load=platform4#ece

[195]Liberal Party of Canada. Opportunity for All: the Liberal Plan for the Future of Canada. Ottawa: Liberal Party of Canada, 2000. http://www.liberal.ca/lpc/pdf/platform_eng.pdf, p. 4.

same time, however, they promised to "reduce taxes further and faster"[196] Of a thirty-two page platform, only one was devoted to children, it was entitled "Giving Our Children a Head Start."[197] It claimed the Liberal Party's goal was to "make Canada the best country for raising children by ensuring...that children are well cared for and ready to learn when they enter school." They claimed they were helping families by reducing taxes, increasing child benefits and providing extended parental leave. The government launched the Early Childhood Development Initiative in September and the Liberals promised to commit $2.2 billion over five years "to improve access to (among others) pre-school programs and child care."[198]

The platform of the Canadian Alliance was heavily centred on tax cuts (11 of 24 pages mentioned taxes and tax cuts). It ruled out putting any of the surplus towards new spending, "...we will put 75% of this extra, unprojected surplus towards paying down our national mortgage – NOT into new spending."[199] The only help that the platform offered parents with the care of their children was through the tax system. The Alliance promised to increase the spousal exemption and introduce a "$3,000 per year, per child tax deduction."[200]

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[196]Ibid, p. 4

[197]Ibid, p. 12

[198]Ibid, p. 12.

[199]Canadian Alliance. A Time for Change: An Agenda of Respect for All Canadians.2000. http://www.canadianalliance.ca/_pdf/platform_en.pdf, p. 12.

[200]Ibid, p. 10.

The Bloc Québécois also proposed $73.4 billion in tax cuts geared to low and middle income families.[201] The party "demanded that the federal government resume negotiations with Québec so that young families can benefit from better parental leave."[202] The platform spoke of the 13 requests made to the federal government by the World March of Women, which the Bloc argued were reasonable and should be addressed. Child care was one of the listed requests.

The Progressive Conservatives offered Canadians a very conservative platform. Help for families with children was to be given through tax cuts. The PC platform promised increases to the "Basic Personal Amount" of tax free income over 5 years, to increase the "married and equivalent-to-spouse amount to $12,000 by 2005," and to "introduce a child amount of $1,176 per child."[203] Child care was not mentioned.

As early as October 16th, six days before the election call, Maclean's Magazine reported "The PM and others like the idea of a polarizing battle between right and left that would see the Alliance and Libs shoot it out, with the NDP, Tories and Bloc Québécois mostly watching from the sidelines."[204] The article admitted that

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[201]Bloc Québécois. Le Québec Gagne à Voter Bloc (English Version). Montréal: Bloc Québécois, 2000, http://www.blocquebecois.org/web/electoral/frameenglish.htm, p. 4.

[202]Ibid, p. 6.

[203]Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. Change You Can Trust: the Progressive Conservative Plan for Canada's Future. Ottawa: Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, 2000, http://www.pcparty.ca/En/policy/index.asp, p. 6.

[204]Maclean's Magazine, October 16, 2000, p. 81.

"election campaigns aren't about the Greater Good." (This is the same sentiment that got Kim Campbell in trouble in the 1993 campaign.) John Geddes wrote in Maclean's, "In fact, polarization is a word Liberal election tacticians and candidates report so often it amounts to their unofficial election slogan." The Prime Minister, he argued, "views the Tories and NDP as distractions barely worth mentioning." The aim of the Liberals' focus on the two different visions, he argued, was "to persuade residual New Democrat voters, and even some Red Tories, to vote Liberal out of distaste for the Alliance."[205]

There were plenty of issues (many of which the Liberals were happy to forget), including the Prime Minister's calling of the election only three and a half years into his mandate. Chrétien's response to criticism on this issue was to further elaborate on the idea that the country was at a crossroads. With the huge surplus, Chrétien asserted that the country had changed course and was back on a sound fiscal footing and now Canadians had to make a choice on the kind of country they wanted. He defined the choice as one between his government, which he claimed was the defender of Canada's social programs, and the Day/Alliance's vision of Canada. Chrétien hinted at and accused Day of having plans to privatize health care, reverse the laws on abortion, tamper with Canada pensions, and cut taxes for the wealthy to further widen the gap between rich and poor. Day had been backing away from many of the Reform/Alliance principles since before the election call. In mid-October, at their

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[205]Ibid, October 30, 2000, p. 20.

platform launch, Day admitted that Alliance would not introduce the single-rate tax in their first term. He was on the defensive from the beginning on health care which his critics insisted he planned to make two-tiered .

Other issues which were worthy of a prominent position in the political dialogue were only given passing attention by the parties and the media. These included: the damning report of the Auditor General which reported mismanagement "in all key areas and in all programs we examined" in HRDC.;[206] the scandal of the failure to account for large amounts of HRDC funds; the report of the Information Commissioner, John Reid, who "singled out the Prime Minister's Office for refusing to co-operate with valid requests for documents and accused the Liberals of mounting 'a full counterattack' against the rules that limit government secrecy;"[207] the report that 1.3 million Canadian children were living in poverty (an increase of 43% since Broadbent's 1989 motion)[208]; the Liberal government's attempts to back off from the obligations of the Kyoto agreement on emission reductions; and the Prime Minister's taunting of Parti Québécois leader, Lucien Bouchard, to call another referendum. Instead, the Liberals turned the election choice into one between the Liberals, saviours

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[206]Quoted in Maclean's, October 30, p. 14.

[207]Ibid, Oct. 30, p. 14.

[208]Campaign 2000. Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada and Ontario. Toronto: Campaign 2000, http://www.campaign2000.ca/natl%20rc%20eng%202000.pdf

of Canadian social programs and the Alliance who Chrétien once called, "forces of darkness" who were out to "destroy Canada."[209]

On November 6th Maclean's reported "As the election campaign heats up, the fighting promises to be bitter." The media became so obsessed with the conflict of personalities and the mean spiritedness of the attacks that it began talking about their reporting of the election. In the November 20th issue of Maclean's, Anthony Wilson-Smith wrote in an article entitled "The Rudeness Game,." "...the media have effectively behaved like our own special interest group, pushing the leaders to behave in ways that suit reporters and editors."[210] There was more interest in the party's strategy and the leaders mistakes and name-calling than in the issues. The Globe and Mail conducted a poll asking readers "Have the media made too much of gaffes and minor slips so far in this campaign?" Thomas Homer-Dixon wrote in The Globe and Mail on November 24th "Info-glut trims our attention span and encourages us to over-simplify and sensationalise policy issues..." Michael Adams and Chris Baker wrote, "The non-debate about health care nicely sums up this campaign."[211]

The post election reviews spoke of the nastiness and vacuousness of the campaign interchanges. In the November 27th Maclean's, Mary Janigan wrote, "The Liberals had waged as shallow and dishonest a campaign as any in Canadian history."

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[209]Quoted in Maclean's, Dec. 4, 2000, p. 18.

[210]Ibid, Nov. 20, 2000, p. 34.

[211]The Globe and Mail, November 23, p. A21.

and ...the campaign ended as it had begun, on a tentative note with issues unjoined, principles unclarified and the country held hostage to a leader who now justifiably believes himself invincible. John Geddes (Maclean's) called the 2000 election "the most acrimonious federal campaign in memory."[212] Anthony Wilson-Smith called it "a nasty, soul-deadening election..." Peter C. Newman argued that "never have Canadians been subjected to an election like this one: none of the essential issues were resolved or even debated...the campaign became a killing field of politicians bent on rhetorical assassination."[213] The Globe and Mail's Anthony Westell described the campaign as "the smelliest in living memory and pointless because it lacked a great issue."[214] What made this election different, he argued, was "the mudslinging," the fact that "this campaign was almost entirely negative," and that "it could and should have been about Canada's future." He argued that the two leaders, Chrétien and Day, "spent more time smearing each other's policies...than promoting their own visions." He blamed the media, too, for covering these attacks, "reporters soon get tired of reporting the old news of stock speeches about party platforms and look for something more exciting.

Child care was rarely mentioned in the media and during the election. When it was discussed, it was dismissed as inconceivable: "Virtually everyone agrees we can

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[212]Ibid, Dec. 4, 2000, p. 18.

[213]Ibid, p. 8.

[214]The Globe and Mail, November 27, 2000, p. A17.

no longer afford costly new federal social programs or entitlements. Universal daycare? Only the New Democrats still dream of this."[215]

The Globe and Mail featured a full page setting out the parties platforms in brief, entitled "Where they stand." One of the topics featured was Children. Only the NDP and Bloc featured any mention of child care. All three of the other parties spoke of tax based provision of benefits to families.

Child care was even more absent from the election dialogue than in other elections. When it was discussed it was primarily from the perspective of child development. Benefits were generally to be conferred by way of tax related policies and no one, except its perpetual defenders the NDP, proposed a national program. Judy Rebick pointed out early in the campaign that the parties had tried to make women's issues disappear: "The Alliance, Liberals and PC's don't even mention the word "woman" in their platforms. Traditional women's issues of child care, child support, and maternity leave are identified as children or family issues in all the platforms, except the Bloc Québécois'."[216] They were largely successful.

The parties had shed even the rhetoric of child care. They no longer felt the need to make promises on this issue since they had come to realize that women did not vote en masse on women's issues.

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[215]The Globe and Mail, November 23, 2000, p. A21.

[216]Judy Rebick. "Women's Issues." CBC, http://cbc.ca/election2000/diaries/rebick001102.html

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

From this examination of the words and deeds of the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, it is apparent that only the political rhetoric has evolved and changed. While child care advocates and the New Democrats have consistently spoken of child care as an essential component of a society in which women are able to achieve real equality with men and have the freedom to choose the type and hours of their paid work, neither of the ruling parties was ever seriously committed to this goal. Indeed, a review of electoral debates, policies and task forces that preceded and followed the 1984, 1993, and 2000 elections indicates that neither of the two governing parties were ever truly committed to the kind of child care advocated by the child care movement - publicly funded, high quality, universally accessible, licensed child care with national standards.

David Bercuson et al in Sacred Trust argue that "[t]he Tories came to power [in 1984] with the idea that government was already too big, too active, and too involved. They had no intention of launching major new governmental initiatives, because they believed that the government was already doing more than enough."[217] By 1993, the Liberals had also adopted a smaller, less expensive government stance,

[217]Bercuson et al, p. 297.

"...we are mindful of the serious financial constraints facing us as a government. We know that we cannot spend our way out of the crisis we face...we have to measure whether specific government programs actually deliver results over time... [t]hat is why we have placed so much emphasis on evaluation, innovation, and finding best practices."[218] It was easy, therefore, for the Liberals and Conservatives to sacrifice even their modest advocacy of child care to the so-called exigencies of responsible spending.

The federal government has also been willing to use the constitutional argument for the downloading of the child care question to the provinces. The federal government collects and distributes the lion's share of the tax revenue but the provinces are constitutionally responsible for most areas of social policy. The provinces, therefore, can justify the lack of progress on child care by pointing their fingers at the federal government and the cuts to transfer payments. It is a classic Canadian question to which politicians at both levels can argue that it is not their fault, it is not within their jurisdiction.

It is also telling that the issue of child care continues to be labelled a "women's issue" even after 30 years of national debate on gender equality. For those feminists and child care advocates who lived through of the second wave of feminism, who argued and fought for the rights of women to choose to work outside the home or in,

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[218]Liberal Party of Canada. Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada. Ottawa: The Liberal Party of Canada, 1993, p. 12.

and to pursue paid work in all areas and at all levels of the work world, this is enormously frustrating. Limited progress has been made in the area of parental leave policy but not as much progress as had been hoped in the area of the equitable division of work within the home. Few fathers, therefore, take advantage of the parental leave provisions and women still dominate in the care of children, both in unpaid and paid care.[219]

Childbirth and lactation are inevitably gendered, caring for children is not, yet Western society continues to socializes girls and women into caregiving roles. As "women's work," caregiving has been consistently undervalued despite the rhetoric which idealizes motherhood. Until recently, housework, including the care of children, had not even been included on the Canadian census as an occupation nor as part of the calculation of the gross national product. Only after extensive lobbying on the part of women's groups did a question regarding the amount of time spent by people on unpaid housework come to be included in the Canadian census.[220] Little is likely to change in a meaningful way in either public or private child care as long as the attitude that child care is women's work and a private responsibility remains .

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[219]Women in Canada spend an average of 7.9 hours per day in paid work and they spend 4.6 hours per day in unpaid work in the home, including 2.4 hours of child care. Men on the other hand spend an average of 8 hours per day on paid work and 3.2 hours on unpaid work, with an average of 1.8 hours of child care. (Statistics Canada. "Average time spent on activities,1 total population and participants, by sex," http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Families/famil36a.htm)

[220]Luxton, Meg and Leah Vosko. "Where Women's Efforts Count: the 1996 Census Campaign and 'Family Politics' in Canada," Studies in Political Economy, V. 56, Summer 1998, p. 49.

The 1984 election and every election since has seen the major political parties field mostly well educated, white men from privileged backgrounds. Running for office is an expensive and time consuming endeavour, one which takes the candidate away from his or her family for long hours each day and, generally, every day of the campaign. Successful candidates will find themselves with little time for their families and most will be far from home for long periods. These are some of the reasons few women with young children choose to run for office. The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform (1989) also listed sexual stereotyping, problems with child care and less flexibility in women's occupations as reasons which kept women from fully participating in the political process.[221] The majority of child care is still done by women and wealthy Canadians do not require publicly provided child care because they can either afford to have a parent remain at home (as Mulroney and Turner did) or can afford to pay for privately provided, high quality child care either in the home or at a facility which provides well trained and well supported caregivers. The fact that most political leaders are male and come from Canada's economic elite makes the issue of high quality, publicly funded and universal child care unlikely to become a high priority with legislators. By introducing to the debate the notion of personal responsibility, as neo-liberal politicians have, the implication has been that mothers should either care for their own children and live with the consequences or arrange for care in another form,

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[221] Report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform, quoted in the Globe and Mail, January 26, 1993, p. A13.

independent of the state. This has left women, particularly those in single-parent families, with the burden of arranging and paying for child care or staying at home to care for their children. In either case, it has usually meant substantial economic hardship.

In light of the cynicism of voters and the falling level of Canadian's participating in the federal voting process (1984 - 75.3%; 1988 - 75.3%; 1993 - 69.6%; 1997 - 67%[222]; 2000 - 61.2%[223]) it seems a truism to suggest that political parties make promises in elections which they fail to keep. In 1984, however, Canadians were still voting in large numbers and they were also told, not only by the winning party but by all three of the major parties, that child care was an important issue. The Leaders did not say it only once but spoke of it numerous times throughout the campaign. All three parties had written promises within their platform documents on child care and at the Women's Debate two of the three leaders earnestly promised significant improvements. It is not surprising that advocates believed that there was at last going to be some federal government action on child care.

It is remarkable that Mulroney abstained from making a policy statement on the child care question in the debate. It was likely because it was late in the campaign

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[222]Statistics Canada. Federal General Elections, by Electors, Ballots Cast and Voter Participation. http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/State/Government/govt09c.htm

[223]Elections Canada. Thirty-seventh General Election 2000: Official Voting Results: Synopsis. http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=synopsis06&dir=rep/37g&lang=e&textonly=false

and Mulroney, confident of success, did not want to risk a statement than might affect the party's post-election policies. He was also, no doubt, well aware that he and the Conservative Party were operating at a disadvantage on the issues being discussed in the debate. They were weak on women's issues and Mulroney, himself, was conspicuously lacking credibility on these issues.

The carefully framed language of the political parties in their policy documents was also telling. It was sufficiently obscure to give child care proponents hope yet permit the governments to deliver something far different from advocates' ideals, while still claiming to have fulfilled their campaign promises. The federal elections and the intervening years were a roller-coaster ride for advocates of publicly provided child care. Advocates had repeatedly hoped and occasionally believed that the Liberals or the Conservatives were finally going to deliver on their promises and institute a national child care plan. However, not even the principle of non-parental child care, let alone the government provision of it, was adequately debated or resolved by the two governing parties. The result has been poorly supported programs with no national standards but with minimal public support and regulation. Even the New Democrats, who, on the national level, were promising the epitome of child care advocates' dreams, did not adequately support a high quality child care program when in power provincially. In fact, though the federal government under CAP provided funds for child care for low income families, no provincial government ever provided subsidies to the maximum of their abilities. In other words, provinces kept the cut-off for subsidies to families lower

than they had the federal funding to provide. They had access to funds from the federal government which would have allowed them to cover more families with higher incomes.[224]

Since the 1980s and the rising tide of right wing neo-liberalism fueled by the debt and deficit hysteria, child care has slid back farther and farther from the possible and into the realm of the incredible in discussions of social programs. This has allowed politicians to remove child care from the table and place the issue of responsibility for children squarely back on the family and the market.

One hope for child care is that Québec's example will spur other provincial governments to emulate their approach, just as Saskatchewan's example led the way in Medicare.[225] Though child care has been equated with both Medicare and public education it is still not popularly conceived as an issue with the same kind of valid appeal to universal and public support. Unlike health care, child care has never been able to garner the widespread support needed to pressure the federal government to implement a federally funded and regulated program. Nor has it had, until recently, one province lead the way in the establishment of such a program independent of the federal government, the way Medicare had in Saskatchewan. Without that leadership and example, a national universal child care program remained only a possibility. Bob Rae,

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[224]Tyyskä, Vappu. Women, Citizenship and Canadian Child Care Policy in th 1990s. Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, 2001, p. 5.

[225]Godfrey, J. and R. McLean, quoted in Friendly, 2000a, p. 32.

former New Democrat Premier of Ontario, suggests that a national child care program can "emerge out of a long steady process of building" just as Medicare did "because one provincial government was prepared to stand up and say, 'We want to do this.'"[226] Québec has done just that. Rae further argues that federalism can be an advantage in the creation of a national program like child care because it "allows us to take the examples in certain provinces and use those as benchmarks and examples for other jurisdictions."[227] Although the result might be another "patchwork quilt of services," the more examples of success, the better the future will seem and the more pressure there will be on the federal government to act to equalize services across the country. Martha Friendly has suggested that it may be possible to use the Social Union Framework Agreement to argue that Canadians in all provinces should be provided with child care services at least as strong as Québec's. The Agreement states that governments must "ensure access for all Canadians, wherever they live or move in Canada, to essential social programs and services of reasonably comparable quality."[228] The example of Québec is, however, problematic because the majority of Canadians seldom examine political developments in Québec as guiding beacons for the rest of the country. Instead, Québec is more often dismissed as a threat or an annoyance.

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[226]Rae, Bob. "The Politics of Child Care in Canada: Provincial and Federal Governments," in Gordon Cleveland and Michael Krashinsky, eds., Our Children's Future: Child Care Policy in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001, p. 65.

[227]Ibid, p. 66.

[228]Social Union Framework Agreement quoted in Friendly, 2000a, p. 35.

The issue of child care is unlikely to go away. Canadians need it and will obtain it where they can.[229] The danger is that parents will be forced to place children in unregulated, poor quality care and future generations of adults and workers will fail to live up to the demands of Canadian society. In the 2000 election, even in discussions of the possible uses for the federal surplus, new programs were not discussed except in the context of health care and then only by the NDP. McDonough attacked the Prime Minister, in the Leaders Debate, for failing to institute either a national pharmacare program or a national home care program as his party had promised in the 1993 and 1997 elections. She did not question the Liberal's failure to fulfil the 1993 promise of increased child care funding.

In 2001, the liberal residualist head of Canada's two-headed social welfare state is clearly in the ascendancy. The question remains: has the political rhetoric and landscape permanently changed or will the pendulum swing back and create a terrain more friendly to social democracy? If the troubles currently being experienced by the right wing Alliance party[230] are an indication of a growing alienation with right wing

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[229]The demand for child care consistently outstripped the available spaces in licensed child care facilities. Many parents were forced to rely on unlicensed centres, family members, neighbours, or paid in-home caregivers: "[a]pproximately 80% of children are in some form of unregulated, informal care and this applies to preschool and young school-aged children." In 1998, "[o]nly about 12.2% of Canadian pre-schoolers attend[ed] a licensed day-care, compared with 14.5% in unregulated care outside the home." (Kohen, Dafna and Clyde Hertzman. The Importance of Quality Child Care. Ottawa: Applied Research Branch, Human Resources Development Canada, 1998.
http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/stratpol/arb/conferences/nlscyconf/hertzm2-e.shtml)

[230]Stockwell Day, the Alliance leader is fighting a losing battle against party members who want him to step down. Thirteen federal parliamentary caucus members have called for his

policies there may be reason for those people on the left to be hopeful. However, the New Democrats are also experiencing falling membership numbers and questions from within and outside the party as to its viability and a leadership race seems inevitable. The question also exists – how much does the political agenda have to move back to the left in order to make a national child care program a possibility in light of the seemingly unanimous acceptance by the population of a lower tax and reduced government spending approach. Canadians appear to have accepted the elite, right-wing view that new taxes and new programs are unacceptable, therefore, a national child care program seems very unlikely. It will be worth examining the changing dialogue in the years before the next federal election for the evolving emphasis.

Another question is – can a child care program emerge without a shift in the political agenda based on the principle of access to comparable programs within the Canadian federation. Child care advocates, now well aware of the history of political promises and increasingly cynical of campaign rhetoric, will have to fight a creeping disillusionment in order to maintain the pressure on the federal and provincial governments for adequate child care. It is unlikely, however, that provinces, with neo-conservative or neo-liberal governments - Hamm in Nova Scotia, Lord in New Brunswick, Harris in Ontario, Klein in Alberta, and now Campbell in British Columbia - would be concerned with the pressure of Québec and child care advocates to reverse

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resignation and withdrawn from the caucus to sit as independents. (http://cbc.ca/news/indepth/background/day_timeline.html)

their small government, low tax agenda even using the Social Union Agreement. Only if governments with an interest in a strong governmental presence in social welfare are elected both at the federal and provincial level is progress likely. Women political activists find themselves instead in the uncomfortable position of fighting for the preservation of programs of which they were critical, such as CAP, rather than fighting for new more extensive and meaningful programs.[231]

Besides the hope Friendly and Rae expressed, however, there is one other possibility which may lead to a strengthening of the demand for child care. There has been a great deal written in the media lately about labour shortages in some traditionally female occupations, such as teaching and nursing, as well as in some fields which are growth areas for women, such as medicine . These shortages are readily evident to most Canadians, too, because they impact directly on people's lives. As baby boomers are aging and beginning to retire, economists are predicting that the situation will only get worse.[232] Because of high levels of unemployment since the early 1980s, governments have assumed that women will always be available both as workers and as caregivers. The impending labour shortage may change that and be child care's greatest means to acquiring the support of the political elite. It may develop that

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[231]Cohen, 1997 and Prentice, 1999.

[232]See the CBC web site http://cbc.ca/servlets/Search?sp-s=0&sp-c=5&sp-a=000611d2-sp00000019&sp-q=labour+shortage &sp-p=all&sp-w-control=0&sp-w=alike and Shawn Mccarthy, "Shortage of Workers Could Mean Retiring at 67," Globe and Mail, September 7, 2001, p. A1.

Canadian federal leaders realize that it is in the country's best interest to supply child care as a means of encouraging women to remain in the labour force. It may be the need for women as workers that again legitimizes the provision of a national child care program and the need for human resources that will push the federal and/or provincial governments to place child care back on the political agenda, just as it was during the Second World War. Child care will then have come full circle.

Appendix I

National Action Committee on the Status of Women
Women's Debate, 1984[1]

Question: The federal government currently spends $180 million a year. This provides an insufficient number of spaces for very low income families and the rest goes to tax deductions. Middle income families cannot afford high quality child care services. How much more money would you be ready to set aside to provide affordable child care services for all families and in what shape will this contribution be provided?

Broadbent: $300 million a year on child care centres... This would be helpful to women but not only to women but it would also be helpful to me who stay at home. The federal government has to start out somewhere. It has to adopt a serious approach. I would like to add another point. We have to accept that child care centres are an institutional right for Canadian families just as medicare is. It is a fundamental principle for all women if you want to you have complete equality. Then you have to start out solving the problems of child care centres.

Turner: First, I think that child care is of prime importance for a family not just to give greater freedom to these families on an economic level, it is the only way of leaving children under surveillance while these women can meet or fulfill their ambitions as workers, as managers working outside the home. Otherwise it is not possible if you don't have this. Therefore, as I say it is of prime importance, now we have to find the means of enabling women to have a greater choice. They can either keep the children at home under the supervision of a neighbour perhaps or they can be supervised in the neighbourhood by neighbours or they could be at a child care centre in the plant or in the office, that is with the employer.

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[1]University of Ottawa, Archive of Canadian Women's Movement. National Action Committee on the Status of Women Women's Debate 1984.

Therefore, so as to promote this goal of the universality of day care centres for children we have to consider various options. The federal government through the income tax act is dealing at the present time with the allocation of credit at $2000 per child with a total of $8000 per family. I might consider increasing this amount to a total of $12,000 per family. This will cost us $10 million per year. We also have to consider another way of ensuring government intervention and I say intervention because really this is generally a provincial jurisdiction and I'm talking here about the 50% which is contributed through the CAP to defray child care expenses for women and families of low income. But in order to consider a whole universal system then we have to have a federal provincial conference. We have to discuss this matter with the provinces because the provinces have prime jurisdiction here so as to achieve a result with wide possibilities. The proposal of Mr. Broadbent, who is considering the cost of $300 million, we think it would be $600 million, therefore, we have to find ways so as to remain financially responsible but nevertheless achieve our number one objective.

Broadbent: $300 million is not sufficient , that is true. But you have to start somewhere. $300 million is at least a start. You know, you made the point before and, in fact, your minister, Judy Erola, made the point because I asked a question on child care centres and at that point she suggested that it was a provincial responsibility. Well, Mr. Turner, I am simply saying that 20 years ago the Liberals and the Conservatives said exactly the same thing about Medicare. They said, "Well, you can't do it just because these are provincial responsibilities." However, at a certain point in history of this country you have to make changes. You have to have national programs. At this time, 52% of women work outside their homes but 85% of the children of these women who work outside their houses do not go to child care centres. You can't always wait for provinces to do anything. You have to start now. You have to start out with federal money.

Turner: First, we have to return to m first proposal. That is order to free women, in order to achieve economic equality for women we have to promote a universal system of child care centres. For me this is obvious. Also, we have to recognize that we live in a federal system. We have to consult with the provinces. We have to find wasy of

sharing the costs. We have to find ways of financing capital expenditures. It might be possible to encourage employers to build facilities and to stress the need to pay daily costs, for example, for children in these centres. There are all sorts of possibilities here. But in order to achieve a universal program the cost is $600 million. We have to include the provinces. We have to recognize that we live in a federal state. I agree with you, we have to take action but we have to take action on the basis of consultation with the provinces.

Broadbent: I'd like to continue on this topic because it is extremely important indeed. For instance, you suggested that the end cost, that the final cost is going to be somewhere around $600 million. That's fine, fine but I'd like to start out with $300 million and I hope the provinces will also start on their own but just as we did with Medicare in the past the federal government at that point took the leadership, took the initiative. And, Mr. Turner, you as the prime minister, could say it right now to the provinces. You could tell Mr. Davis or you could tell Mr. Pauley. You could say we're ready to give $300 million to start the program out. You can agree, you can also provide money for this because as I stated before you have to have federal leadership in this type of an initiative. The income tax system at the present time, for instance, you suggested that we give income tax benefits in order to use them for child care centres, however, 80% of the benefits go to persons who are already fairly wealthy. They don't go to ordinary women who are working and not to the working poor. Fairly wealthy women are the ones who get most of the benefits and that is the system we have now for centres.

Turner: I would like to answer that because it is a very important subject. Yes, I'm going to act as a leader to convene the provinces but you have to discuss the methods. You have to discuss the financing. You have to give options, possibilities to women, possibilities that I mentioned not an obligatory method for one, not one mandatory method. You have to discuss all these matters. And in answer to your second point on the income tax act, I already mentioned that we have to consider this whole question of 50% under the CAP for families of low income and last week I announced a new program to help the 100,000 women in single parent families. I wanted to help these women to pay their rent so they could also help with child care centres and therefore I haven't neglected the poor or the disadvantaged in our society. We have to consider a system which meets all our needs.

Appendix II

Press Conference held by the Cooke Task Force (excepts)
March 7, 1986 - National Press Theatre

Present: Katie Cooke, Jack London, and Renée Edwards

Professor Cooke introduced the committee and commented that the committee dealt only with children under 13 years of age as 12 is the legal age for being left alone. She also commented that they felt it is important for both parents, both mother and father have the responsibility and privilege of caring for their children. She noted that they had received 7000 letters from interested parents.

Cooke: Our rationale here relates not only to the child, although perhaps the child is the primary focus including development not only in physical terms but in intellectual, emotional and social terms, the health and welfare of the family, of parents. Also, we see child care as a societal need and responsibility.

Edwards: There is an almost total lack of quality services across the country. 9% of children of working parents have access to licensed monitored care. Each day the situation gets worse. ...the supply of [informal, unlicensed care]...is also decreasing. The result of this information that we now have accumulated and have available to us has led us to the conviction that in Canada today child care is in a state of crisis and that we cannot avoid or evade this situation.

London: It has been left to me to five you the thrust and the bottom line of the recommendations. In the report we have recommended two haves of the whole process. One side a series of recommendations dealing with the provision of child care services in Canada and the other half being the extension of parental leave parental leave rights on the birth or adoption of a child and thereafter on the extended leave and special circumstances so that parents can raise their child and be the primary caregivers to their children, in Canada in a realistic and economically feasible way.

> We had a decision to make in terms of the dollars that are going to be requested to be thrown into this program, therefore, as to whether or not the federal government, who we are now calling on to take the leading role to provide the initiative for the development of a rational and systematic system of child care in this country which is now completely absent. We had a question as to whether or not that federal role in expenditure ought to be to put the money into the hands of the users of that service or not the hands of those people or institutions which provide the service. We made a fundamental decision, which is crucial to the findings of the Task Force and to the recommendations, that funds be placed in the hands of the suppliers of the service not in the users of the service so that we can see to the orderly and systematic development of a quality and controlled system of child care in Canada. On that supply side, those funds, which will come from the federal government initially and ultimately will be cost shared with the provinces after negotiations, those funds will be applied only to licensed, that is licensed by the provincial governments, non-profit organizations. The Task Force unanimously rejects the notion of public funds being put into for profit child care in this country and we accept the notion of provincial responsibility for the establishment of licensing systems and accountability systems within each of the regions of the country rather than attempting to have that controlled centrally from Ottawa. After all, what can Ottawa know about the circumstances in the Northwest Territories or British Columbia or Frobisher Bay? There has to be a local input to these decisions.
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> In the short term, regarding unmatched federal grant by provinces, we think that the federal government, in its role as the national government, ought to take the bull by the horns and deal with the problem and get the ball rolling and to do that put up the money without requesting that the provinces match in the first instance.

The Task Force recommended $2.9 billion annually but did not expect it to be implemented until sometime after the year 2000. They also argued that income tax revenue will increase as a result of increased employment. Also, there would be a decrease in expenditures for social costs, eg. welfare, juvenile delinquency, etc.

They argued that child care is highly labour intensive work and would create 350,000 jobs in the medium term and 500,000 jobs in the long term.

London: We think that this is the key social issue of the decade and we think that it is, therefore, incumbent on the government to recognize that what we are requesting is simply that we take a look at the priorities of government in terms of the population of Canada. And we say where is there greater priority than the future citizenry of this country. We couldn't find one and, therefore, we recommend the program be put into place.

When asked, why not put the funds in the hands of the users and why leave child care tax deductions in place when you know it is so incredibly unfair to low and middle income families. The committee replied that child care should be compared to public education and argued that giving the funds to the suppliers of the services would make for rationality and quality control of the system rather than fragmenting it.

London: What we know is this is not simply a parental responsibility. This is a public responsibility.

Question: Do you think that there is some particular willingness to commit several billion dollars to a day care system?

Cooke: All we can tell you about the commitment of the government of the day is what we read, by and large, in the media reports and there was a campaign promise to the effect that child care was a priority issue.

Appendix III

Press Conference Held by the Special Committee on Child Care - Excerpts

Present: Shirley Martin, chair, Lucie Pépin, Lynne MacDonald, Suzanne Duplessis, and Roger Clinch.

Shirley Martin introduced the Committee saying it would be looking at all children, not just those of working parents nor just the traditional family. She stated that the first goal of the committee was "to help children and parents."

Pépin: It is important to remove barriers to work for women. Child care is not a luxury but a necessity for all children. (She referred to the Abella report.)

MacDonald: The need and the value for [sic] child care don't need to be debated anymore and it is very important that the work of this committee not simply be a duplication of the work of the group of Katie Cooke. $750,000 of government money was spent on the Cooke study. This task force was a response to a demand of the Canadian Daycare Advocacy Association and it is time now to call on the government to implement another of its urgent recommendations and that is for an infusion of funds, $3000 million into daycare from the federal government. Without this kind of funding, this committee will be engaged in a public relations proposal. So with a budget coming up, I think we will see the government's real commitment to daycare by seeing how much money there is for daycare services.

Martin explained that the Cooke Committee's report would be part of her committee's study. She also commented that "Government support is extremely necessary. She spoke of parental choice.

Pépin: I am biassed. I see a need and if Katie Cooke is recommending $300 million then that is what is needed. The only thing is, I'll be finding out how that could be done. Maybe we'll need a little bit more. And, I

think that the coming budget, they will say that we have to cut but I think it is one of the fields that the government won't be able, I think, to cut. It will be daycare, family.

MacDonald argued that the NDP had already raised the figure of $300 million. She went on to say that she thought it was important not to force daycare advocates to have to make their case again. She wanted the job of this committee to be to tell the government how to implement the findings of the other committees.

Question: Is this committee a delaying tactic?

Martin: No, we will be working from the Cooke report.

Pépin: We will be really pressing for the government to release the Cooke report as soon as possible. The behaviour of the government in response will show everyone the government's commitment.

Martin spoke of the importance of choice for parents, the freedom to choose the option they feel is best for their children.

MacDonald: This committee should be taking the next step from the Katie Cooke Committee not redoing the other committees' work.

Question: Would you, please, comment on whether there is a role for private daycare in this whole issue or whether you think that this has to be public?

Pépin: I don't want to give the priority to private daycare compared to public daycare because we know very well that the large number of families don't have the salaries to go to private daycare so I think private daycare will be one aspect but the public daycare, you know, we cannot renounce to have public daycare.

MacDonald: Certainly, the NDP feels very strongly about public daycare. We know already that salaries are very low in this field. There are problems with standards. These big, you know, Kiddy Care kinds of corporations from the United States are in it for profits and we do not think that's an appropriate field for profit making. That care should be organized through non-profit kinds of agencies. Obviously, this is going to be expensive, obviously we're going to have to proceed by steps.

Martin: The prime concern is that we have quality, affordable daycare in Canada and if the private sector can share with government in providing that service then I think there is a place for them in the marketplace.

Appendix IV
from the Report of the Standing Committee
on Human Resources Development

The Committee endorses the federal government's commitment to increased child care funding.

- The Committee recommends that the federal government discuss with the provinces and territories the development of a more coordinated approach to child care. We believe that the current federal financing arrangements, where child care is funded under CAP in the context of "welfare services," are an inadequate approach. Moreover, federal child care dollars are currently dispersed over a number of programs and departments, a feature which further complicates the federal financing role.

- The Committee recommends that the federal government discuss with the provinces and territories the establishment of standards appropriate to high quality child care and attuned to early childhood development needs.

- The Committee recommends that in discussions with the provinces and territories, the work of child care workers be properly valued and their access to educational opportunities in early childhood development be improved.

- The Committee recommends that the quality and integration of child care delivery be considered at the same time as governments plan increases in the number of spaces available.

- The Committee recommends that the upcoming federal-provincial-territorial discussions, based on existing commitments to increased child care funding, serve as the groundwork for establishing a strengthened and improved child care system in Canada.

- The Committee recommends that a portion of federally provided child care financing be designated for the provision of Aboriginal child care services.

- The Committee recommends that a further portion of federal child care financing

be allocated for the needs of children with disabilities, so that they may take advantage of opportunities for full participation in the community.

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