

Child Care

Oral Questions

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Michael Savage Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NS

Mr. Speaker, speaking of plans that are not working, let us talk about child care.

Canadian families are amazed at how out of touch the human resources minister is. Last week I asked her to indicate the government position on parental leave because her departmental lawyers were in court questioning the value of the current one year parental leave that supports parents to stay at home for a year with their children. She did not answer that one, but she did ignite a firestorm of protest by insulting parents who use child care when over 70% of mom's work.

Will the minister apologize to Canadian families and does she support the current one year parental leave plan brought in by the previous Liberal government?

Diane Finley Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development

Mr. Speaker, we respect the right of parents to choose the form of child care that their children receive. Whether it is mom and dad staying at home, whether it is granny looking after them, or whether it is institutionalized day care, we support that choice through our universal child care benefit.

Let us take a look at the Liberals, when it comes to insulting parents. They are the ones who said that parents would spend the universal child care benefit on beer and popcorn. It was the Liberals who said that staying home to raise kids does not constitute a real job. We have a lot more respect for parents.

Michael Savage Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NS

Mr. Speaker, the minister talks a lot about choice, but Canadians do not think much of the choices she has to offer. She suggested that families choose vacation time to help a sick loved one. She suggested EI was too generous, that perhaps workers choose to be on EI. Now she offends parents who use child care, and it seems that the one year parental leave program is on the chopping block as well. That would be quite a choice for Canadian families.

When will the minister stop attacking families and call a halt to her tough on families agenda?

Diane Finley Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development

Mr. Speaker, we have done a number of things to help families. Apart from the universal child care benefit, we have made it possible for families with low income to get over the welfare wall with the introduction of the working income tax benefit and doubling it. We provided sports tax benefits to encourage the health of our children.

We are not going to insult Canadians like the Liberal member for **Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel** did when he referred to the universal child care benefit and said:

--the problem that I'm seeing is that the parents don't provide. They may have the money, but they use it for their own purposes--

That is an insult to Canadian families.