



CANADA

Debates of the Senate

2nd SESSION

• 40th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 146

• NUMBER 15

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Child Care

Question by

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

THE SENATE

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[*Translation*]

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

CHILD CARE

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, to encourage businesses to create child care facilities at the workplace, the government is offering a tax credit of up to 25 per cent of eligible expenses for each space created. Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us how many spaces have been created thanks to that tax credit since it was introduced in Budget 2007?

[*English*]

Senator LeBreton: I thought I answered that question. An additional 60,000 child care spaces were created, but as I indicated to the Honourable Senator Cowan and the Honourable Senator Eggleton, I will try and identify these numbers for each province. The number of 60,000 additional child care spaces was provided collectively to the provinces and territories. I do not know the numbers for each province, but I will try to find out for the honourable senator.

[*Translation*]

Senator Tardif: I will rephrase my question. I am talking about the spaces created by businesses as a result of the tax credit they receive for up to 25 per cent of eligible expenses. I will answer my

own question: not one space has been created by businesses. Most employers consulted in 2006 preferred to act in partnership with local child care service providers, instead of creating child care spaces themselves.

Why did the government not explore other options rather than promoting this program, which employers do not support?

[*English*]

Senator LeBreton: My apologies to the honourable senator. My earpiece did not pick up the translation for the first part of her question.

• (1415)

With regard to the private sector creating child care spaces, the honourable senator claims that the sector has not provided any child care spaces. I know of several companies that have onsite child care facilities. I do not think the honourable senator's number of zero is credible.

The fact is that the care of our children is obviously administered by the provinces and territories, but there are many industries in this country working in partnership with the communities. There is a host of delivery systems. To suggest that our corporate or business communities do not take any responsibility for providing child care facilities is quite unfair to them, frankly.