



## ***The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Meetings***

*Various media outlets Vancouver 14 Feb 05*

### **Notable quotes**

#### **Canadian Press, February 10, 2005, CAMILLE BAINS**

Sharon Gregson, a spokeswoman for the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, said the group has spent 20 years lobbying the federal government for a national child care plan. But still, across the country there are licensed child care spaces for only 12 per cent of children. Besides Quebec, Manitoba and Ontario are ahead of other provinces with their child care programs, she said. "It really is a scandal that we have the second highest rate in the industrialized world of women in the paid labour force and we don't have a national child care system," Gregson said. "This is potentially a historic moment for Canada, the birth of a new social program, but it has to be done right to make it worthwhile."

#### **CBC TV News, February 10, 2005**

Martha Friendly (UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO): "It's not going to be that they sign the agreement and that everybody's going to be able to get high-quality, affordable, early learning and child care. That's going to take a while to develop. One big challenge is actually, you know, kind of managing the federal/provincial quagmire, and it's a quagmire. You know, my view of it is that politics often trumps policy."

Michael Krashinsky (ECONOMIST) : "It's expensive to take care of children, but it's extremely expensive not to take care of children. If you don't do a good job of taking care of children, then those children enter school unprepared to learn. They don't do as well in school. They don't go to university in the same numbers. They aren't as productive in the labour force and down the road they don't pay as many taxes."

#### **Toronto Star, February 11, 2005, Sean Gordon**

"This is our first new social program in a generation and we believe it has to be based on sound fundamentals," said Debra Mayer, of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. "Canadians don't want just any deal. We're looking for the best deal for our kids, for our families and our communities. And that's what we'll be watching and waiting for tomorrow."

#### **CBC News, February 11, 2005**

Stephanie Seaman, a child care worker, "Canada's child-care system is a patchwork quilt of inequality for families. There's no consistency across the country. There's no consistency even from community to community to community – what parents pay, what kind of availability there is in child care."

"Parents shouldn't be paying more than 20 per cent of the actual cost of child care, and the reality is that for many families, child care costs more than their mortgage or their rent," said Debra Mayer, chairman of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. "We're not expecting that every child in Canada is going to be in full-time child-care centres. "What we are talking about is a system that is open and available to families, and that they can choose the extent to which they want to use it."

#### **Broadcast News, February 11, 2005**

Debra Mayer of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada is optimistic there will be a national plan. But she says it could take up to 15 years to build the kind of system that has space for every child in Canada. Mayer says they want the plan cemented in law, so budgets and elections can't erode Canadian child care. In *The Daily News (Halifax)*, *Don't equate profit with evil*, February 11, 2005 Margo Kirk of the Childcare Advocacy Association said: "There is no room for profit in early childhood education and development - every dollar must be spent on care."

#### **Vancouver Sun, The child-care nightmare, February 11, 2005, Amy O'Brian**

"If you talk to most families with young children, they'll say child care is a nightmare," said Sheila Davidson, child and youth advocate for the City of Vancouver. "[The child-care situation] is a crisis. It's truly, truly a crisis." According to Davidson and other advocates, the government must stop making excuses and put a plan into place. "It should be happening now. It's about the children." Those who can't get their children into licensed daycare centres are finding creative means to get by, including the use of unlicensed or even illegal child-care options, said Pam Best, program director for the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre. "There is an unlicensed, underground market out there," Best said. "We don't know if [the unlicensed programs] have criminal record checks, first aid, any training at all, or if they have more than the legal number of children."

#### **Edmonton Journal, February 11, 2005, James Baxter**

"I'm not optimistic," Forsyth said earlier this week. She argues that the province should be able to direct the money as it sees fit, including assisting stay-at-home parents. She said Alberta will go along with a deal only if it allows funding of a variety of child-care options and that the system be accountable solely to Albertans, not the federal government.

#### **Ottawa Citizen, February 12, 2005, Joel Baglole**

Alberta said it had problems with what Children's Services Minister Heather Forsyth called the federal government's "cumbersome" accounting process. "Alberta is not going to sign a contract without seeing all the details," she said.

Susan Harney, a representative with the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C., said it was important for governments to come up with a concrete and comprehensive plan. "If the ministers are not able to reach an agreement today, because they haven't been able to get the framework right, then that's fine," Ms. Harney said. "But if they are not able to reach an agreement because they're squabbling or playing politics, then that is unacceptable."

#### **Edmonton Journal, February 12, 2005, James Baxter**

Dryden said the ministers have reached "substantial agreement on most questions" but admitted some formidable obstacles remain. "What we're looking to do is come to an agreement where quality is at the centre and, in terms of the delivery, each province has the right to deliver as it would like to deliver against that standard of quality."

The Klein government needs to put children ahead of political games, said New Democratic Party critic Raj Pannu. "This government's rhetoric about putting children first knows no bounds, but when the opportunity presents itself to do something to genuinely improve conditions in Alberta, they resort to old petty politics," said Pannu. "It's disappointing."

The failure to reach a deal was greeted with mixed feelings by supporters of a national child-care system: "I think it's shameful that provinces are holding up children's rights and benefits to children and families if they are holding them hostage to federal-provincial negotiations," said Monica Lysack, executive director of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. "For some provinces to say that we don't want to be accountable to any of that is inexcusable. They have to be accountable."

Traudi Kelm, president of the Day Care Society of Alberta, said she is disappointed that much-needed funding will be further delayed. "We're taking the first steps in this province ... but we're going to have to see more money," Kelm said. She said Forsyth's insistence that the money comes without strings is unrealistic.