

Remarks by the Honourable Jane Stewart, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada on the values underlying social policy development in Canada ^[1]

Author: Stewart, Honourable Jane

Source: Human Resources Development Canada

Format: Speech

Publication Date: 27 Mar 2003

AVAILABILITY

Full speech available ^[2]

Excerpts:

What I'd like to do is share with you some of my views around why a continued investment in social policy is so important for Canada as we enter this new millennium. Furthermore, I'd like to talk a little bit about how I think good social policies should be developed and implemented in a modern Canada. And then, of course, I want to talk to you about a particular area of social policy that we've had some pretty good success in over the past few years, and the programs we've developed in support of Canadian families and their children.

We've also been working with the provinces to expand to a broader platform of services for all families and children. In the year 2000, we did sign a landmark Early Childhood Development agreement again with the provinces where the Government of Canada provides money for the provinces to invest in the four priority areas of servicing. The process requires accountability, reporting, reflective of the principles that I discussed in terms of developing good social policy. But again, over the course of time, we found there's an area where we can really turn on the jets. And this brings me to the case of early learning and childcare.

One of the biggest challenges that families face in the workplace is ensuring that their children have reliable, safe care. It's an expensive proposition to create new spaces, to pay our very valuable childcare providers, and to provide the subsidies so all parents have access to childcare. And so the Government of Canada said yes we recognize that's under provincial jurisdiction. But it is also important that we should make a contribution.

A few Thursday's ago I sat at a table with provincial and territorial ministers and we got a deal: \$900 million will be transferred to the provinces and territories to help them expand regulated early learning and childcare. For me, that is a fundamental breakthrough. The table will tell you it's a foot in the door, but it's a great foot in the door. It is important for us to have a system in place that is responsive to parents, and ensure that our kids, whom we know are able to learn at a very early age, can get those early opportunities to socialize, to learn and to develop.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very proud of the infrastructure, the human infrastructure that we have been building together in support of our children and our families. For me, in the context of the role people play in our new economy, that investment is as important if not more important than investing in streets and roads, and the other kind of traditional infrastructure that businesses rely on governments to provide so they can do their work.

I'm thrilled that we have been able to encourage a larger partnership from really all walks of life to focus on our children and our families, and to focus on the importance of social policy. Because, in my mind, it is critical to our success and our future as a nation. Now, in closing, I know these are very difficult times. Believe me, I feel the pressure as one of your representatives in Ottawa about the discussions and the decisions that we face every day in the global context.

But when we get a minute, a quiet minute to reflect on where we are and what we have and our knowledge that by continuing to invest against our values and support humanity and democracy and also see how those investments put us in a competitive position in improving our quality of life, increasing our standard of living and our economic prosperity, we can breathe easy. It's not simple work. It will never be over. It's going to take every single one of us to keep pushing the agenda. But it's worth it. Because it will ensure that we continue to live in what is arguably one of the best countries in the world, our Canada.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/04/remarks-honourable-jane-stewart-minister-human-resources>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/04/remarks-honourable-jane-stewart-minister-human-resources> [2]

<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/speeches/hrdc/2003/030327.shtml> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864>