

Forget Trudeau's Nannygate, the real scandal is wealth inequality ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Nannygate? Please.

So the most powerful person in this country is the parent to three children, and married to a woman with a career of her own and now the added duties of being a prime minister's wife.

So the Liberal government hired a few nannies to help out around Rideau Cottage and lend a hand with the kids.

So what?

Yes, I know, Trudeau made a big to-do during the campaign about exactly how much his family doesn't need taxpayer dollars to cover child care.

Railing against the Conservatives' Universal Child Care Benefit that funnelled about \$3,000 his way, he told media that "we don't need it. And Canada can't afford it."

And, now that he's in office, taxpayers are most assuredly paying more than three grand a year for two nannies, at \$11 to \$20 an hour each, depending on whether they're working a day or night shift.

But did anyone actually think that, of all the perks that go along with being prime minister, child care wouldn't be included? Do taxpayers somehow feel morally OK with paying for his in-house chef, and not his nannies?

Being prime minister isn't a blank cheque, but it is a privileged position, and I couldn't care less that we're supporting two child-care professionals along with the gardener.

Far more important — and the point of all of Trudeau's anti-child-care-benefit rhetoric — is the need to address the growing inequality between people in this country. According to the Broadbent Institute, the richest 20 per cent of Canadians own almost 70 per cent of the country's wealth. Last year, TD Bank called rising inequality a "threat to economic growth" — and it's most certainly a threat to the ability of many Canadians to afford quality child care.

And if you want to talk about nannies, let's talk about how much they're paid (hint: it's less than the chef). My sister worked for years as a nanny. Often spending more time with children than their own parents could, she moulded the kids she worked with, giving them basic tools to handle their emotions, teaching them self-respect and responsibility, never mind joy and self-expression. It was not particularly lucrative, though the families she worked with did pay her in gratitude. And it showed me that we value coding skills, say, over raising kids.

Nannygate could better earn its hand-me-down name if it alluded to some of these more pressing scandals in Canadian child care. What the Globe and Mail calls Trudeau's "apparent contradiction" is an incredibly underwhelming controversy, at best.

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