



Canadian  
University  
Employees

2170 Western Parkway, U.B.C., Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1V6

224-2308

June 2, 1986

Mrs. Micheline Rondeau-Parent  
Clerk, Special Committee on  
Child Care  
Suite 308, 151 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mrs. Rondeau-Parent:

The Canadian University Employees Union represents approximately 1300 clerical workers at the University of British Columbia. Ninety percent of our members are women, and a significant proportion of them are the sole wage earners for their families. As you can well imagine, child care is an issue of primary importance to us. We are an affiliate of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and have studied the brief submitted by them to your Committee on March 26, 1986. We fully support the arguments and positions presented in that brief, and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate some of the points made there, and to express some concerns of our own.

As a group, we are acutely aware of the need for quality child care. There is an argument that undoubtedly occurs often in the material you are studying. This argument concerns changes in the family structure that necessitate wider availability of child care. Our bargaining unit is living proof of these changes. Those of us who are fortunate enough to have two wage earners in our family can attest to the fact that such an arrangement is a common necessity, and no longer a matter of choice. The majority of us do not have a family situation that allows our children to be taken care of in the home. Ideally, we would like our children to have access to the kind of care that would contribute to their development, where they can be together with other children, and be cared for by professional child care workers. Many of us have to resort to less than satisfactory situations, such as baby sitters who are necessarily poorly paid, sometimes poorly motivated, and often not properly skilled.

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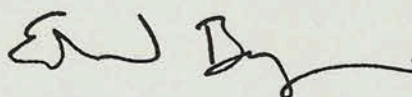
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The current availability of child care, and the methods through which it is made available, are entirely inadequate. It is often very difficult for us to find space in a properly licensed day care facility. We frequently run into roadblocks posed by hours of work, age restrictions, as well as cost. In the CUPE brief we read that child care is available for only 11% of children under 6, and 5% of children under 2 who require it. For us this is more than a statistic, it is a harsh reality with which we have to live. The current user-fee based system, with welfare based subsidies, makes accessibility of child care even more difficult and burdensome. The fact is that we belong to that group which is least subsidized--that is, we are neither extremely poor, and therefore do not qualify for direct subsidies, nor are we well off, and therefore do not benefit greatly from child care tax deductions. The wages for clerical workers in our bargaining unit range from \$15,288 to \$22,380--that is to say, an amount which, as a single wage, is either insufficient to support a family, or just barely so. Under the current system of subsidies, none of our members who are single wage earners qualify for subsidies, with the exception of those in the bottom steps of the lowest pay grade!

For the reasons stated above, we are fully in support of the proposals presented by CUPE, as well as the proposals presented in the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association document entitled 'Proposed New Federal Policy on Financing Child Care', and the recommendations of the recent Federal Task Force on Child Care. That is to say, in a nutshell: a range of quality child care, properly regulated and administered, at least partially funded by the Federal Government through transfer payments (similar to those that support provincially administered post-secondary education and health care). We would like to add that we favour decentralized, neighbourhood-based child care, with parent involvement. We are also concerned that child care workers be paid adequately for the highly skilled and responsible work that they do--this is not the case at present, and is another serious symptom of the overall problem.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views on this issue.

Yours truly,



Ted Byrne  
Union Representative

TB/HCG  
CUE