

Government Orders

This is a very real danger from what I have seen by perusing briefly the reform document we received only yesterday. You can say the Minister surely has devised other solutions to give students access to education. Yes he certainly has. He suggests they use their RRSPs to pay for their schooling. He suggests that students pay their tuition fees with their RRSPs. How fantastic! One must be a complete stranger to reality to imagine that RRSPs would be an alternative for students. I know very few students who own a RRSP. For that, you have to be part of a rich family or one who owns a family trust.

You could reply that perhaps the Minister meant the parents, that perhaps he will convince the Minister of Finance, who plans to tax RRSPs, to allow parents to use their own RRSPs for their children's education. I see two main problems there. RRSPs were not designed for such a purpose. They were meant to ensure a certain financial security to families, to middle-class people who work, so that they can have at least a minimum security for the future.

• (1155)

So if, out of their generosity, because parents always want the best for their children, parents are forced to use their RRSPs for their children's education, of course children will get a higher education, but the parents will no longer have a retirement fund. That is the kind of situation the Minister is creating for families.

Furthermore, we must admit that not everybody owns a RRSP. One has to be able to afford it and, again, that applies to a chosen few. So it is absolutely incredible that they would propose the RRSPs as a solution.

An hon. member: They are laughing to our faces.

Mr. Bouchard: Right! They are laughing at us.

Let me conclude. The intention of the Minister and of the government goes far beyond this social reform. The Minister wants to change the position of the federal government in Canada, to restructure the relations between the central government, the provinces and the people.

When the Minister says they will create direct links between the federal level and the citizens who will take advantage of the various programs, manpower training programs for example, when he says they will deal directly with local stakeholders, communities, municipalities, businesses, etc., he is in fact saying they will go over the head of provincial governments. So he is truly asking the most fundamental question. The question he is asking is the fundamental one.

What the minister and the government are telling us with this reform is that there are too many levels of government, one too many in fact, the provincial level. They are telling us Quebecers

that the redundant level of government is the one in Quebec City and that, from now on, Ottawa should manage everything.

I do not know what people in other provinces think of all this, but we should know shortly when our friend, the Leader of the Reform Party, takes the floor to give his view on the reform. However, I doubt that provincial governments across Canada would accept to bow down and make way for the imperialistic and centralizing aspirations of the federal government.

For us in Quebec—and I do not speak solely for sovereignists, but for all Quebecers—the main entity is the Quebec State, which we used to call the province of Quebec. It is this government that we want to entrust with the power to make fundamental decisions regarding the future of Quebec, regarding the definition of policies which will shape our soul and identity, regarding the design of education programs, regarding the relationship between social and job-creating measures, because without any close tie between the two no reform of social programs can succeed, and this is the main flaw of this reform. It cannot tie what needs to be tied, it cannot make the gears mesh together. There is no synergy, no cohesion. The definition of social programs must tie into a definition of job creation, but the reform does not do that. It would be possible only in a nation where there is a single level of government, and this is why the minister wants a single government, he wants to seize the powers he does not have to complete his reform.

In Quebec, we want the same thing. We want a government which will make all the decisions that concern it, a government able to mesh social demands and job creation. We want a cohesive state, a machine that works.

[English]

I would like to conclude with this. It appears to me that this reform is trying to achieve the reshaping of Canada, to achieve some kind of hegemony for the federal government wherein the provincial governments would have a very limited role, a policy which would state that the federal government would stamp the instructions.

For example, it would be possible for the minister to make sure that social and economic policies would be meshed together so as to produce a synergy, a coherence. It is not possible now; we all know it. The minister has in front of him provincial governments, and in Quebec a very strong provincial government determined to defend its position.

This government would like to push the provincial governments aside. To me and to those in Quebec it means that the message is that there is one government too many in the country and that this government would like to have only one, the federal government. We in Quebec believe that it should be one government in Quebec.