

*Government Orders*

Contrary to the fine promises which were uttered hand on heart, contrary to the statements of love and respect made in a none too subtle way in Montreal, the federal government is preparing to circumvent the will of Quebecers in a vital sector, that is to say training and labour programs.

• (1215)

Once again this government, which claims to be in favour of a decentralization of powers, is preparing to grab greater powers by means of the administrative restructuring of the Department of Human Resources Development Canada, which is the purpose of Bill-96.

Unfortunately this is not a coincidence, since the same thing happened with other departments. This is the case for example of the Department of Health and the Department of Canadian Heritage. I have already condemned the same underhanded tactics used by the government in those cases.

In the bill before us, that deals with the Department of Human Resources Development, the minister gives himself an enormous power that will extend to all areas relating to manpower.

As we are now able to really identify the government's huge appetite, members of the Bloc Québécois want to alert public opinion in both Canada and Quebec. Bill C-96 contains a key section, that is, clause 6, which reads as follows:

The powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction relating to the development of the human resources of Canada not by law assigned to any other Minister, department, board or agency of the Government of Canada, and are to be exercised with the objective of enhancing employment, encouraging equality and promoting social security.

This clause contains all the potential sources of major conflict between the provinces and especially between Quebec and the federal government. Indeed, it is important at this moment to go back in time and to point out clearly that the federal government, after some unfortunate procedures before the Privy Council and to the great displeasure of the provinces, obtained constitutional jurisdiction over unemployment insurance only. It is because of its strange and omnipotent spending power that it has invaded manpower training and that it now wants to get into the field of equality and social security.

I am not making this up; it is clearly set out in clause 6 of the bill. This further intrusion is very badly orchestrated and has been denounced by many stakeholders, both sovereigntist and federalist, such as the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Institute of Adult Education and the Quebec Minister of Employment.

I would also remind the House that, historically and constantly, all Quebec spokespersons on this issue have denounced federal interference in manpower training. What will provincial organizations and governments think of this new federal intrusion on an exclusively provincial jurisdiction? I am sure that reactions are currently negative, will be negative and will soon be made known. They will follow Quebec's claims. Will they have the good fortune of influencing the direction that the current government has set for itself? I have my doubts about that. This is a very unfortunate situation because this new constitutional snag goes against the interests of the population.

In a document called "Un Québec pour l'emploi", which he published this year, Pierre Paquette analyzes the requirements for a full employment policy in modern Quebec. Mr. Paquette, who has been secretary general of the CNTU for five years, has also sat on the board of directors of the Economic Council of Canada and on committees to kick-start the economy and stimulate employment in the southwest and east ends of Montreal. He identifies three major elements of a comprehensive employment strategy.

The first element is all the actions that have a bearing on economic growth factors, including both individual corporate policies and social economic policies affecting all of society as well as the international community. The second element is the link between sectoral and regional development policies as part of an industrial policy. The third and last element stresses the importance of implementing a whole series of active manpower initiatives including professional training, placement, specific measures for disadvantaged groups and regions, and reducing the number of hours of work in all its forms.

You may have noted that all these areas come under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Mr. Paquette goes on to say, "Effective implementation of a comprehensive full employment strategy requires a strong social consensus. In this regard, it is hard to imagine how the various social stakeholders across Canada could agree on the implementation of a full employment policy".

• (1220)

This conclusion is clear and explicit. As we have said a thousand times in this House, there is a consensus in Quebec that this government persists in ignoring with impunity.

The people of Quebec reject Bill C-96. They reject this counterproductive approach, which, far from giving them concerted access to the work place, keeps them a little further away.

In closing, I would like to make a suggestion to the government, which, until the next referendum on Quebec's future, will at least allow the people to benefit from their contributions to both levels of government.