

Supply

The reform as presented is not what Quebec wants. The consensus against it, which we have voiced here on numerous occasions, took on a particular historical value with the National Assembly's motion of yesterday.

Let me read on:

Therefore, it asks the government and the Minister of Employment to immediately undertake formal discussions with the federal government in order to ensure the respect of the consensus and the promotion of the interests of the Quebec people.

What the federalist members who supported this motion, including the Quebec Liberal Party members, said was not: "We must accept the planned reform as presented by the federal government". They said it was necessary to "immediately undertake formal discussions with the federal government in order to ensure the respect of the consensus and the promotion of the interests of the Quebec people".

This initiative by Quebec is therefore entirely legitimate. And if the present federal government is not listening, if it fails to change its reforms accordingly, it will be up against a wall. And as a result, it will again fail to deal with the problem.

Why is Quebec so keen on controlling this jurisdiction? Because as much as \$500 million will be invested in five new employment measures. And by 2001 and 2002, it may be \$750 million. These employment measures affect all of the areas over which Quebec has jurisdiction.

Canadian federalism is a very good example of inefficiency. Although Quebec is responsible for the Labour Code, occupational health and safety legislation and labour standards, the federal government will set up programs relating to wage subsidies and income supplements, a job creation fund, assistance for unemployed entrepreneurs, and a system of loans and bursaries. We will take a closer look at some of these to show the potential for conflict.

For instance, the job creation fund. If Quebec wants an active employment policy, it will have to adopt the federal government's development model. If the Quebec government feels that the federal model is not the one it wants, and if current reforms are supposed to promote manpower mobility and get people out of the resource regions when we in Quebec prefer to promote growth in our regions, we will be stuck with this model forever.

Another example is assistance for unemployed entrepreneurs, the program referred to as self-employment assistance. In Quebec the so-called Paillé plan was implemented. If Quebec wants to develop these measures, it will not be able to control them all, and we get a situation where people who receive self-employment assistance are not eligible under the Paillé plan. If they are on the Paillé plan, they do not get self-employment assistance. This creates situations in which young people

who want to start a business have to knock on the doors of two governments. This reform will not resolve the situation.

My final example involves the loans and grants program. You may be sure that, in the medium term, the program, which is intended to provide grants to the unemployed looking for work will conflict with Quebec's loans and grants program for students outside the regular programs. We will start making comparisons, we will look at workers' behaviour to see whether they would not do better in a regular educational program than under the federal program. This will raise the level of the cacophony between the two governments.

This is why, I think, the wish of Quebecers expressed in the National Assembly may be readily understood.

• (1330)

Furthermore, after the consensus was reaffirmed over the fact that Quebec must be solely responsible for manpower adjustment policy, the minister of employment was told to discuss matters with her federal counterpart. She did so right away yesterday. She wrote the Minister of Human Resources Development to tell him she was ready to discuss matters within the context of the mandate given her by the National Assembly. The mandate is to promote the interests of the people of Quebec and ensure respect of the consensus that Quebec must take control in this area.

Why are we having such a hard time getting the federal government moving on this? When we toured Canada, last year, with the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, we found in several circles that there was a willingness to take over, through decentralization, certain aspects such as manpower training. Why is it that the federal government has not yet moved in that direction?

The answer can be found in certain elements of the unemployment insurance reform. This reform adds to an already complex decision making process, thus assuring the bureaucrats running the national network that their empire will endure. The best way to perpetuate a bureaucracy is to make it more complex, thus justifying the existence of more assistants, more advisers, more this and more that, in the end making the product less accessible to the client they are supposed to serve.

If there is one thing the government can be blamed for, it is its inability to cut through this bureaucracy and do what the people really want. I think that the federal government was being called to order by the motion passed by the Quebec National Assembly. The National Assembly has put the federal government squarely in front of its responsibilities.

It must listen to the consensus conveyed by the Quebec National Assembly. I will stress that 96 voted for the motion, none voted against and none abstained. All the members present in the National Assembly supported this motion. I would ask the Quebec members on the government side this: Are you willing to move a similar motion giving Quebec sole responsibility for