

ment, thereby eliminating costly overlaps and duplications in federal and provincial tax collection.

Since the mid 1960s, opting out agreements have allowed Quebec to withdraw from a number of federal-provincial programs and to assume the related administrative and financial authorities. In 1992-93, the federal government paid more than \$2 billion to the Quebec government under these opting out agreements.

No, Madam Speaker, Canada is not an overly centralized state, as members opposite would have us believe. Canada takes the necessary steps to meet the challenges it faces, which is precisely the object of the bills mentioned in the motion. For example, let us take Bill C-91. The sole purpose of this bill is to give more flexibility to the Business Development Bank of Canada, formerly known as the Federal Business Development Bank.

The changes proposed to the bank's mandate will not usurp provincial powers, far from it.

• (1045)

The primary purpose of these changes is to improve services to the bank's clients, small and mid size businesses, so that they are better equipped to develop and create jobs.

The official opposition is wrong if it considers this bill as a trick that the federal government is using to invade provincial jurisdictions. The Canadian government uses no tricks, others can do that. And the polls show how little success they are having.

The motion also mentions Bill C-88, an act to implement the Agreement on Internal Trade, which was concluded, in July 1994, by the Prime Minister and provincial first ministers. That agreement is an example of how efficient Canadian federalism is. It will promote interprovincial trade liberalization, as well as economic growth and job creation.

Those who support separatism are constantly telling us that they are free traders and that they support access to new markets, as well as the free movement of goods, services and labour. Consequently, I do not understand their objections when the federal and provincial governments agree to liberalize internal trade. Come to think of it, I do understand their reaction very well: the official opposition has no interest in admitting that Canadian federalism works well. This is why it opposes this legislation so strongly.

People are not stupid. It is obvious that the Bloc Québécois is firmly opposed to a Canada-wide economic association. Quebecers will know what to expect when the details of the offers are made public. Clearly, the official opposition's campaign to promote economic association is nothing but another ploy or mirage to try to fool Quebecers.

### *Supply*

The official opposition also denounces Bill C-46. This is rather surprising since, on September 26, at second reading, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières had this to say about that legislation: "Bill C-46 is aimed at maintaining the status quo, making the minor amendments that are needed, but not substantial". Yet, today, the official opposition is launching an all-out attack against this bill. True, this is not the first time that the Bloc has changed its mind.

Bill C-46 seeks to establish the new federal Department of Industry. It merges four departments into a single one which will be better equipped to implement three priorities. Let me read you the three priorities of the new department.

The first one is to create better conditions to do business. This means doing everything possible to allow businesses and workers to concentrate on job creation.

The second priority is to stimulate trade. This means using new ways, inspired by Team Canada, to take advantage of foreign market opportunities, and to help Canadian businesses access these markets.

The third priority is to create an efficient infrastructure. This means ensuring that Canada has transport, telecommunications and information networks which will enable businesses to be efficient in a modern economy.

You will agree, Madam Speaker, that these priorities meet the true concerns of Canadians, including Quebecers. However, the official opposition is not pleased with these priorities. The Bloc Québécois tries to block every initiative designed to help boost the economy and create jobs. Such an attitude is unacceptable, considering that so many Quebecers are out of work.

• (1050)

Official opposition members keep saying they are here to defend the best interests of Quebecers. These interests require that the opposition play a constructive role and support the federal government in its efforts to boost the economy and enhance job creation. Quebecers understand, increasingly, that the interests the official opposition is defending are not theirs. Finally, the official opposition is also opposed to Bill C-76.

In this regard, one need hardly be surprised that the advocates of separation are opposed to last February's federal budget. Our budget shows that Canadian federalism works and, what is more, is working well. This budget mentioned only two conditions to be met: compliance with the five principles of the health care insurance plan, and prohibition of the residence requirement as a criterion for eligibility to social assistance. Seventy-seven per cent of Quebecers believe the principles underlying the Canada Health Act are very important. In every other social program, provinces will agree by mutual consent on shared principles and goals.