

*Supply*

Therefore, Quebecers must do some thinking. At first we had thought they would have to decide between the status quo and sovereignty. Now, however, it appears that the choice is between a degenerating status quo with the federal government wanting to intervene even more and sovereignty. It is very clear.

• (1235)

I understand why people who consider the federal government to be the main government in Canada, the one that must apply all the rules, have difficulty understanding where the official opposition stands on this issue. When one looks at it from Quebecers' perspective, it is clear that for Quebecers in general, the main government has for a long time been and still is Quebec. The government in Ottawa is to a large extent the result of a compromise made in 1867.

Quebecers cannot accept that this federal government systematically interfere in areas such as social programs, internal trade and potential loans by the Federal Business Development Bank, and give the Department of Industry the responsibility for regional development in Quebec and in Ontario when one knows very well that this system never worked.

The Tories had been forced to create parallel agencies to put an end to this bureaucracy. Now the Liberals come back to the old system which suited Ontario but does not suit Quebec. I have nothing against the fact that members of Parliament from Ontario protect their interests, but I am against the consequences of restoring an old structure which adversely affects Quebec and does not offer good prospects.

Let us take, for example, the bill to implement the Agreement on Internal Trade, Bill C-88. We should keep in mind that this bill implements an agreement based on co-operation. Everyone in Quebec, Canada and North America realizes how important free trade is. It is so important that Quebecers rallied to the defence of the FTA, which would never have passed without Quebec's massive support. The FTA goes well beyond interprovincial trade opportunities.

Adjustments were made to reach an acceptable compromise. This agreement is based on interprovincial co-operation. Suddenly, with Bill C-84, the federal government is surreptitiously putting its big paws in this agreement by introducing a judicial process into an agreement based on an administrative consensus that disputes should be settled between the parties.

However, the federal government has now come up with a wonderful idea. In one case, whether or not the federal government is a party to the dispute, it may impose sanctions on the provinces which, in its opinion, do not comply with the agreement. This amounts to being both judge and party. This is a concrete example of the paternalistic approach used by this government and developed by the Canadian federal system,

since, under the federal decision making process, senior officials always feel that they are right about what to impose on Canadians.

I now come back to the example of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. A year ago, officials, deputy ministers told the committee that UI reform would introduce two levels of coverage. They said that people in the outlying regions and seasonal workers go on UI because they are not prepared to work hard. Our committee travelled across Canada and unanimously rejected the proposed system. The minister set up a committee on seasonal work, which also rejected the whole approach proposed by the federal bureaucrats. This week, senior officials smugly outlined for our committee the same vision they had a year ago.

Although he may have acted in good faith in this matter, the minister did not succeed in convincing them to change their proposal one iota. The bureaucracy's control over Canada's development is unhealthy. Bureaucrats are responsible for the current results. It is because of them that regional disparities are so wide, because they never wanted, because this government in particular does not want, to give each region control over important sectors. Instead, perhaps because the constitutional provisions on the division of powers are so vague, it always feels like interfering in areas of provincial jurisdiction, simply because it has the right to collect and redistribute taxes.

Following the Canadian social transfer and the agreement on internal trade, the federal government is stepping up its attacks by proposing a new Business Development Bank of Canada.

• (1240)

Clauses 20 and 21 of the new legislation to change the name of the Federal Business Development Bank to Business Development Bank of Canada, which is a minor change as far as the name is concerned, make it possible for the federal government to systematically interfere in regional development. This goes to show, once again, that the federal government does not regard regional development as a provincial area of responsibility. In fact, it is unclear whether the provinces exist at all in the eyes of the federal government.

Under clause 20 of this bill, it may deal directly with any organization, which means that the same pattern will be used as in the past. The federal government will walk in with its money, tell community consultation organizations, municipalities or development funds: "The thing is, we can give you money for regional development, but we want to have a say about how it will be used, since our contribution will be substantial". And the pattern of fighting will be repeated, with provincial and federal organizations each defending their turf. In the end, who will be the losers? The people. In this case, with the development bank, the businessman is the one who will be in a worse