

control. Worse, if, at the end of negotiations, Quebec, with the knife to its throat, refuses to bow to the dictates of the federal government, Quebec will be unable to do what it wants.

I am sorry the minister finds this funny; he could say he was open, but he has not managed to call even a single meeting of ministers of manpower and employment in the time he has been in office. He has not been and still is not known for his flexibility.

It is hard to avoid feeling worried and discouraged in the face of a text such as this, regardless of the minister proposing it, because it is absurd to find ourselves once again in this endless twisting and turning at the expense of the ordinary folk.

• (1025)

Subclause 61(2), which deals with training, stipulates that the central government, through the commission, and I quote:

—may not provide any financial assistance in a province in support of employment benefits mentioned in paragraph 59(e) without the agreement of the government of the province.

But paragraph 59(e) reads as follows:

59. The commission may establish employment benefits to enable insured participants to obtain employment, including benefits to:

(e) help them obtain skills for employment, ranging from basic to advanced skills.

It is important to have a good understanding of this provision. It means that, this time, with respect to the so-called employment benefits the government wants to introduce, in the absence of an agreement, it may proceed on its own by giving the commission the required mandate. In this specific case, however, it goes so far as to say that if the province—Quebec, in this instance—disagrees, it will not give anything. Great.

It would make people responsible for Quebec's refusal to relinquish its jurisdiction. The last time we saw this was when Maurice Duplessis was in office.

These provisions are extremely disturbing and do not appear to portend successful negotiations, far from it.

These measures, which are supposed to help workers, are in fact modelled after other measures already in place in Quebec to help welfare recipients improve their lot and find jobs they can keep. These measures already exist in one version or another. Except that, in this case, the federal government—that is the beauty of it—is set to introduce similar initiatives that will create an inextricable web of overlap and duplication so that two individuals in the same business could each receive a different kind of income supplement: welfare in one case and job benefits in the other.

Supply

This kind of chaos is unacceptable. Co-ordination is needed. We must see to it that workers and people looking for jobs benefit from a real labour policy. The only way such a policy can become a reality is if Quebec has control over all these measures.

This bill was expected. The minister had said that it would make people change their attitudes and that it would really help, as the ambitious title "employment insurance" shows. Yet, I cannot help but point out that the \$800 million that will be spent on these measures will in fact only be spread over five years, another \$200 million for all of Canada, because measures are already in place whose effectiveness needs to be reviewed but whose total cost is \$4 billion, with the difference that only \$1.9 billion comes from unemployment insurance.

• (1030)

How much will that make by the year 2001, when this reform is complete? Some \$4.2 billion, or a mere \$200 million more, with this difference however, and a crucial difference, that an additional \$800 million will be paid out of the UI fund then while, as a result of the general tax currently levied to cover the cost of most of these measures, \$600 million less will come out of the consolidated revenue fund.

This whole operation that had raised hopes results in \$200 million in fresh money, but also and again, for Quebec in particular, in the imposition of measures causing duplication and overlap, jamming the labour market and preventing Quebec from putting in place an urgently needed manpower policy.

I hope that, even though he laughed earlier, the minister will understand that the consensus in Quebec calls for the government, as a modern constitutional system, to recognize Quebec's jurisdiction and to accept that Quebec should have sole responsibility over this manpower policy for ordinary people and, therefore, that the allocated funds made up of money coming from businesses and workers should be transferred to Quebec to administer according to its own needs and priorities.

I repeat, this must be done not only with the consent of the parties, but also that of business, labour, the co-operative movement, community groups, which may have been more active in Quebec than elsewhere, perhaps because Quebec was seriously hit by the 1982–83 recession. But this consensus is the best guarantee of what could be the Quebec model, in which we will be able to use our resources, our scarce financial resources, to help ordinary people whose individual well-being is in great need of improvement.

I sincerely hope that our plea be heard in the interest of the people, because the government has no right to stubbornly keep preventing Quebec from fully playing its role like this.