

Government Orders

even by virtue of the sums of money allocated. This is very difficult to accept.

If each side were able to set its own standards, this would not preclude, for example, that at the international level—and this is a very specific example and I would hope that this would be the case in the future, even though it would prove very difficult—there would be general agreement on minimum environmental standards to be met. This would be desirable.

Which is not to say that minimum standards should be set to instruct each community on the training of its workers. Each economic milieu has its own specific characteristics, its own special niches, therefore, it can adapt more quickly. National or broad measures or standards are often cumbersome or slow to respond. The closer one is to that milieu, the more one is grounded in reality and the quicker one is to react.

The constraints we now face in terms of international economic development, namely the opening up of markets and the free movement of goods, capital and people, mean that those who have the ability to respond the fastest will be the ones who are best able to cope in the future. We have to avoid getting bogged down in national standards that are not to our liking, often do not correspond to our needs and create a great deal of friction between Canadians and Quebecers because they cannot agree on their definition.

When Quebec is a sovereign country, and I hope this comes to pass, we will set our own standards, while Canadians will set theirs. I think that it will be much easier for both sides to set their own standards and if we were to agree eventually on common standards in specific areas such as the environment, well then so much the better. But first, we have to start with the basics, with our own milieu. This is the preferred approach of the Bloc Québécois and of a good many Quebecers.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Témiscamingue for his excellent speech. He talked a lot about equity and I would like to make a few comments in this regard. When we talk about equity, we are talking about a fairer redistribution of wealth among the provinces. What we should be asking ourselves is why some provinces are poorer than others. We could look at the problem before distribution and ask why Ontario is a wealthy province while Quebec is not so well off. I do not like to hear that my province is poor or not so wealthy.

• (1250)

When we are making every effort to succeed in life and some higher authority, the federal government for instance, keeps us from developing to our full potential, I do not like to be seen as poor. I would like to use every opportunity to develop to my full potential, as the hon. member said earlier. For example: why did Ontario receive research and development contracts worth \$1.2

billion more, in 1989, than Quebec. Would research and development not enable us to make money and to help our businesses grow? Is this not the reason why Quebec is a little poorer than Ontario? I do not like to be seen as poor. I would like to be able to give money to other provinces, as the hon. member said earlier. But it is not the fault of Quebecers if their province is poorer, it is the fault of the federal government that does not give Quebec the means to develop to its full potential. It is for these very reasons that we want to leave.

Here is a flagrant example of the other reason: in 1989, I asked the head of Statistics Canada how their employees were distributed across Canada. I was told that they were distributed very fairly, with about 180 employees in Ontario, 150 in Quebec, about 80 in the Maritimes and 80 in the West. I told the head of Statistics Canada that there was something wrong with his calculation since their total workforce is about 4,000. He said yes, but 3,500 people work here in Ottawa. But where is Ottawa? Ottawa is in Ontario. These people pay taxes in Ontario. They are fuelling the Ontario machine. They are helping Ontario to prosper. It is for these reasons that Ontario is better developed and richer than Quebec. For all these reasons. One does not have to look very far to see that Ontario is richer and more successful because the federal government treats it better.

The hon. member for St. Boniface should pay more attention so he can understand all this. He would then realize that he, too, is being penalized. He should react a little more, too.

I would like to say, once again, that the hon. member for Témiscamingue has delivered an excellent speech. He did an excellent job of outlining the problems we, in Quebec, are facing. I totally agree with what he said in his speech.

Mr. Brien: Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments of the hon. member for Longueuil whose example of Statistics Canada illustrated the situation well. A little over a year ago, I did some work, a study on research and development expenditures. As it were, almost all the money spent within the federal government, the intramuros expenditures as we call them were made here, in Ottawa and the National Capital region. So, by force of circumstance, most of the R and D investments are made in this region.

In some cases, the determining factor is the fact that the National Research Council is located here, but that does not explain everything and even then, the rest of the R and D funds should be distributed more equitably. That is why, as the hon. member said, we must look at the causes and the root of problems if we want to have a clear understanding.

I would like to mention a point that is coming back to me regarding the definition of the standards mentioned earlier. We would not be too happy in some ways—and I do not know what the hon. member for St. Boniface thinks of this—if we were to have common standards and that standards set by the Americans would apply to Quebec and Canada. It would not always be