

Government Orders

one day we may in turn be in times of need. That is the fundamental concept of sharing. The more we fragment the country as the third party opposition would have us do, the more we divide it, separate it, decentralize it and balkanize it into a series of fiefdoms, the less capable we are of helping individuals that no longer have the benefit of that sharing. That is why the federal government must continue to play an important role in this area.

We have always been open to discussions with provincial, territorial and municipal governments about who is the best suited to deliver certain programs. We have negotiated that because we know we do not always deliver the best programs and that things must be done at the community level.

Because clause 6 of Bill C-96 sets out the department's mandate in terms of general objectives, we must have the flexibility to serve Canadians better. I do not want to sidetrack the debate by raising non-issues and reading into clause 6 things that are there. It is really a disservice to the thousands of Canadians in all provinces who benefit from job creation and training.

The other clause in Bill C-96 about which concerns have been raised is clause 20. It reads:

For the purpose of facilitating the formulation, co-ordination and implementation—

Words like co-ordination mean that we work together to make something work. It is so simple and fundamental to a clear understanding of how teamwork is accomplished, of how we pull together, that I cannot understand the problem. Anyway the clause continues:

—the Minister may enter into agreements with a province or group of provinces, agencies of provinces, financial institutions and such other persons or bodies as the Minister considers appropriate.

Any reasonable objective observer would see in this clause no hidden agenda to intrude. It merely provides a way to formulate co-operation with all groups with which we must form partnerships if we are to make the changes.

Without the authority that clause 20 gives the minister the department would have difficulties conducting its simple mandate and its simple business. However the Bloc is bent on getting more power for the political elite in Quebec, while the Reform Party is bent solely on getting more power for the provinces and fragmenting and balkanizing the country.

In 1994-95 the department of human resources signed more than 50,000 labour market related contracts in Quebec which were worth \$700 million. Among those 50,000 contracts were 9,600 contracts with non-profit organizations, 9,300 contracts with private sector enterprises and 25,000 contracts under the fee payer trainee program, all in Quebec. It is the authority granted to the minister under clause 20.

• (1055)

It allows us to enter into agreements with financial institutions for student loans. How are we to create a country of young people who can take over from us and carry on if those who cannot afford to go to school are not allowed student loans?

It enables the federal government to sign agreements with provinces to help displaced older workers. When 45 or 50 year old people lose their jobs, especially in the emerging communication technology era, they need training.

This kind of section empowered Ottawa to enter into a partnership with Quebec to help entrepreneurs and to help workers affected by the closing of the Hyundai plant in Bromont last March. The whole bill helps the department of human resources to create a national vision for Canada. It is not for British Columbia alone. It is how we work together as a country to achieve the kinds of things that make us the envy of the world.

We are a unique country. I continue to hear people talk about how another country does it and why we are not doing it the same way. Wherever we go we hear people saying that Canada is a unique country. We have learned how to work together in peace. We have learned to do what we are supposed to do, that is to create peace, order and good government.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-96—and this may surprise you—seems to me to insult Quebec federalists. A lot of federalists in Quebec still felt, in the last referendum, that the federal government deserved one last chance to demonstrate its desire for change. Bill C-96, which was tabled before the referendum and which the federal government is still having debated in the House simply as if nothing had happened, represents the federal government's decision to interfere more systematically and with a basis in law—a new approach.

The bureaucratic powers in Ottawa have now decided to incorporate into legislation the intrusions by the federal government over the past years in the area of manpower through its control over the unemployment insurance fund. This is particularly significant and a bit of a blow to Quebec federalists and to the consensus in Quebec on the question of manpower.

There is, for example, Ghislain Dufour, the spokesperson and chief executive officer of the Conseil du patronat du Québec, who is not exactly considered a separatist or a sovereignist in Quebec. He says that now is the time, following the close result in the referendum, for the federal government to make it clear it is in favour of change and therefore acknowledge the consensus in Quebec on training and manpower. It is time the federal government agreed to give Quebec full responsibility for man-