

*Private Members' Business*

point that in Quebec, we now have some essential tools such as the following.

I will not address macro-economic policy, as it is Ottawa's responsibility. And in Ottawa, contrary to the government member's claims, concern for employment is not obvious to say the least. An infrastructure program was introduced. Fine, but we must also consider all that was not, and we will come back to this repeatedly over the course of the session. In spite of all the idle talk and the campaign promises, this government cannot be said to be concerned with employment.

At the other level however—and it may be fitting to mention this here—the second component I referred to earlier is basically an involvement policy. Such a policy can, especially in Quebec but in other provinces also, as we will see, be developed at the local or provincial level.

Let me read you two sentences. On what basis do Mrs. Bellemare and Poulin contend that micro-economic employment policy should come under provincial jurisdiction? First, provincial governments are at a definite advantage for political considerations when it comes to implementing such a policy.

• (1135)

In fact, the constitutional division of powers—and as far as I know the Constitution has not been changed, but, of course, it is convenient to forget this—gives the provinces considerable jurisdiction with respect to work and labour relations, education and training, and development of resources. And I would point out that it is Diane Bellemare and Lise Poulin-Simon who are saying this, not the Bloc.

Secondly, there are cultural, linguistic and ideological considerations—to which, it seems to me, the sponsor of this bill could have been sensitive—which put the provincial governments in a better position than the federal government to implement a micro-economic employment policy effectively.

It seems to me that what we are seeing here is the complete failure of the federal policy to achieve what one would expect of a full employment policy, that is economic, financial and budgetary policies at the macro-economic level from the government of the country. And having failed in that, it now wants to become involved directly and with all the necessary control over what is, in this Constitution—but I will say more—the very nature of a full employment policy, something which should be left to the provinces and to the regional and local levels.

I would add that the current globalization of markets, which has not waited for the FTA or NAFTA, is forcing all countries to give the best of themselves to achieve an employment policy. In fact, it is at the level of the people, businesses, unions, groups in each of the municipalities, in collaboration with the level of government most closely concerned and with the closest access

to the constitutional powers that the project and the implementation can be carried out.

That is where it becomes easier when we know that we in Canada have not even been able during all these years to agree on manpower training, which is absolutely essential, and when the NDP bill does not refer in any way to what the provinces do better. That is true in any country. Why do at the federal level what would be done better at the regional and community level? Why? Because of a lack of confidence in the ability of our communities, our regions and, in the case of the Canadian Constitution, our provinces?

There is plenty of goodwill and good intentions that I share. I, however, think that the means used are totally inadequate and cannot work in Canada under the current Constitution. But there is more than that. In Canada—and I think this will last for a long time given Canada's current geography—it is impossible for a full employment policy to be "controlled, implemented and developed from Ottawa". The federal government must have employment-conscious fiscal, budgetary and financial policies, but it must let the provinces, the regions and the municipalities do what they do better, and give them the means to do so. At the present time, the means derive from the spending powers controlled by Ottawa.

• (1140)

I would like us to re-examine this issue, but I am clearly very disappointed.

[English]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, before I get into the main body of my remarks I would like to deal specifically with a couple of points that the member for Mercier made in her remarks.

She talked about this motion not dealing enough with the macroeconomic factors in this equation of creating an environment for full employment and focused very much on the fact that all of these jurisdictions such as training and education be the exclusive jurisdiction of the province.

I would like to remind the member for Mercier that trying to get the macroeconomic factors in the equation right is very tough to accomplish when there are members in this House whose constant barrage dealing with the dismantling of this country affects our markets in terms of the way foreigners invest in this country, which ultimately affects the rate of our dollar, which causes great stress on our deficit and debt reduction programs.

If the member for Mercier is truly committed to getting the macroeconomic side of this equation in place, then I would ask the member to review the impact her party and its dialogue are having on that part of the equation.