

Supply

the federal government does not have a role in national affairs. If we are to be a country we need certain uniform things from coast to coast.

All of these bills whether we like it or not speak to those ideas. Bill C-76 is the budget implementation act. What the Bloc was complaining, whining, moaning and dripping about in the budget implementation act is that it has a clause whereby transfers to the provinces will be block transfers.

This means that instead of transferring specific moneys to education, health and other areas along with the Canada assistance plan, these moneys will be transferred in block, allowing the provinces to do with that money as they will. That makes sense to me. That sounds like decentralization to me. How is it that the Bloc can possibly construe that to be some sort of centralizing plan? What the Bloc did not say is there is a possibility the people of Quebec will have to be a little more careful in how they spend their money because they will get less money.

Our country is into the hole \$120 million a day. Every single Canadian will be in debt. Our deficit per individual Canadian is \$1,375 just for this year. Our total per person debt in Canada is \$19,000. For a family of four it is \$76,000. That is our federal debt. Forget the provincial debt, of which Quebec has a ton, that is just our federal debt. There is going to be less money to transfer to the provinces and I think the Bloc is a little upset over that.

• (1115)

Let me give an illustration of some of the inequities that exist in our country. Under the Canada assistance plan, if someone happens to be on welfare, collecting benefits from the province, and lives in Ontario, Alberta or British Columbia, the federal government kicks in 29 cents of every dollar that is paid out. However, if that person lives in Quebec or one of the other provinces considered to be a have not province, the federal government kicks in 50 cents of every dollar.

Because it is in a block transfer, if Quebec is going to continue to pay benefits the way it has been, then it is going to have to take that money from somewhere else. Why on earth should Alberta residents pay taxes via equalization payments that go to Quebec so that seniors in Quebec do not have to pay for prescription drugs? Those who live in Alberta have to pay for prescription drugs. Quebec is considered a have not province and we subsidize it. Over the last 30 years or so Quebec has benefited to the tune of \$100 billion from equalization payments. Why is it that the rest of the country should put up with that?

I want to make it clear that as a person, I kind of like the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe who led this debate. But I sure

get fed up with him every time he starts to pontificate in the House about how hard done by the people in Quebec are. I thought his comments this morning were pathetic. I wondered how, representing isolationism thoughts like that, Quebecers could possibly have any confidence in that group to run their affairs in an independent Quebec. They would spend the first 20 years of independence building a wall around Quebec.

We know that Quebec benefits tremendously from interprovincial trade which is what Bill C-88 is all about, which they do not like. Bill C-88 was a bill to reduce the interprovincial trade barriers within Canada. The Reform Party objected to the bill because it did not go far enough. We felt the government should have used its powers to force the provinces to bring down the trade barriers. It is in our common best interests to develop a critical mass that will allow us to be competitive on a worldwide basis.

People will recall that when we entered into free trade with the United States we got whipped in those first few years. Why did we get whipped? Because we had a high dollar, high interest rates and we had these interprovincial trade barriers all across the country so that our industries that were protected were not capable of competing in the world markets.

We would have to be brain dead, and I think we were, to enter into an agreement to have free trade with the strongest trading nation in the world without having free trade within Canada to start with. How could we be so stupid—I hate to say not to put bullets in our gun because with Bill C-68 we are not going to have any—as to go hunting and have our guns loaded with blanks?

• (1120)

We have a high dollar, high interest rates and we have these interprovincial trade barriers. The federal government is carrying out its rightful duty and responsibility by saying to the provinces that we are going to get rid of these interprovincial trade barriers so we can compete.

I have notes somewhere on just how important trade is to the Canadians of Quebec, to the people of Quebec whether they are independent or not. Let me make it clear. The last thing in the world I want is the people of Quebec to be independent. If by some quirk of fate they are dumb enough to follow the Bloc and go down that road, this is what they had better keep in mind.

Quebec exported more to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 1989 than to any country in Europe, including France. It sold as much to Ontario as it did to the United States. The rest of Canada exported more to Quebec than to the European Union and Japan combined.