

structure. Right from the beginning, there was a major offensive action against the autonomy Quebec was aiming at. During the two years of the present administration, we have seen countless examples of this thrust towards centralization.

Bill C-96 is but another step in the invasion, by the central government, of Quebec's jurisdictions in the area of social and economic development. Clauses 6 and 20 of that bill reveal the federal government will to limit the freedom of action of the Quebec National Assembly.

Clause 6 defines the powers, duties and functions of the minister, which now extend, and I quote: "to include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction relating to the development of human resources of Canada—with the objective of enhancing employment." The clause is unequivocal; it allows for the creation of a vast federal Human Resources Development department where the minister will have considerable powers and will be free to act without the approval of the provinces. In fact, this bill contains no provision on provincial jurisdiction, let alone on honouring this jurisdiction; on the contrary, it denies Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction over manpower training and development.

Clause 20 lists the organizations with which the minister may enter into agreements. It reads as follows: "For the purpose of facilitating the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of any program or policy [—]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". So the minister may put anyone he wants in charge of managing his department's policies and programs without having to justify himself in the House or worrying about the Quebec government's directives.

In other words, he would have full discretion to contract out. The minister would have the power to enter into agreements with regional and local organizations, including municipalities, thus bypassing the provinces. This bill will allow the federal government to disregard Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction over the design of manpower training and development programs.

Quebec has always denounced the federal government's intention to put in place its own parallel manpower programs in Quebec. Quebec's Minister of Employment, Mrs. Harel, says that this bill is the antithesis of the Quebec consensus on the manpower policy, the antithesis of the single window.

• (1330)

Bill C-76, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 1995, is another example of the Liberal federal government's relentless denial of Quebec. Under this bill, the Minister of Human Resources Development can use the money saved through UI reform to set up a human resources investment fund.

Government Orders

This fund will be spent on manpower training programs, among other things, thus allowing for massive federal intervention—on a discretionary basis and with a centralizing effect—in education, an area over which Quebec has exclusive jurisdiction, with total disregard for Quebec's policies in this sector.

Interprovincial trade is another area in which the federal government likes to impose its centralizing vision.

In Bill C-88 regulating interprovincial activities, the federal government assumes powers that were never discussed when this agreement was negotiated and signed in June 1994. Clause 9 of the bill stipulates that if a party is found to be in violation of Article 1710 of the agreement, the federal government, whether or not it is a party to the dispute, takes it upon itself to impose retaliatory measures against any province without distinction.

This bill shows, once more, the federal government's determination to act as judge and jury in interprovincial trade and to give itself, through this bill, a power of enforcement under orders issued by itself to extend the application of any federal law to the provinces, as stated in clause 9(1)(c).

This unitary state attitude of a centralizing federal system is in contradiction with provincial identities and, as such, impedes the development of the people of Quebec. This attitude is also reflected in Bill C-46 establishing the Department of Industry, whose clause 8 states specifically that the Minister of Industry is responsible for "economic development in areas of Ontario and Quebec".

This legislation only goes to show that there is overlap with respect to regional economic development by confirming the federal industry minister's right to interfere in an area of jurisdiction over which Quebec has been demanding control for a long time.

Bill C-91 to continue the Federal Business Development Bank under the name Business Development Bank of Canada is the last example of the centralizing federal legislation that I will give you here.

Clauses 20 and 21 of this act are totally unacceptable to Quebec. Clause 20 suggests that the Business Development Bank of Canada may enter into agreements with, and I quote: "and act as agent for, any department or agency of the government of Canada or a province, or any other body or person, for the provision of services or programs to" them or on their behalf.

This act also flies in the face of the economic development policies being implemented within Quebec. Under this clause, the Liberal federal government pursues its strategy of centralization, a political strategy to substantially restrict the Quebec government's ability to act in the area of economic development, ultimately preventing it from achieving political autonomy.