

Government Orders

society end up having to pay for this exercise in futility. Need I repeat that manpower training is a provincial matter.

In fact, a province like Quebec, may decide to set criteria that are not compatible with what the federal government has decided to do. These criteria may be better adapted to the province's needs and current situation but not fit into the federal mould.

Let us assume that in Quebec, the Société du financement agricole has standards that are stricter than those of the FIM-CLA referred to in Bill C-75. By setting up parallel programs, the federal government would undermine what the provincial government is doing, in this case the Government of Quebec, and if the province's objective is part of a strategy to develop the agricultural industry, that is just too bad.

Let us assume that the SFA wanted to do something about the alarming increase in farm debt by adopting certain criteria.

• (1030)

But it would not really be free to implement its decisions, because some federal agency would come along and decide that this would conflict with its priorities. Period. Once again, the federal government, with its unlimited power to spend, has the bigger end of the stick. To hell with the deficit. In 1970, this country was almost deficitless. And now, 25 years later, it is saddled with an accumulated deficit of over \$550 billion, and need I remind you of the unpleasant fact that, during those 25 years, with the exception of the nine year Conservative reign, this country has been governed by the Liberals.

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Two and two make four.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): In this case, apparently two and two makes four and a little more, it would seem. And now, I will open a chapter which will again be unpleasant for some of the hon. members opposite. The government of Quebec has decided to launch an investigation into the mismanagement of the crown corporation Hydro Québec. I must say that, when I was a teen, Hydro Québec was the pride and joy of all Quebecers.

Unfortunately, today, public satisfaction with this crown corporation of which we were so proud 20 or 25 years ago has sagged so low that obviously it has almost become a source of public shame. But, the government of Quebec was not afraid to launch an investigation. I ask my dear colleagues across the way why they refused to launch an inquiry into the attempted privatization of the Pearson Airport, from which, as everybody knows, the big wheels of Canadian finance made hundreds of millions? Why are you refusing to hold an independent investigation?

Because, my friends, the Conservative majority in the Senate overrode you on this issue. So, who will conduct the investigation now? Four Conservative and three Liberal senators. Of course, I have complete confidence in our senators. The Prime Minister just appointed Mrs. Bacon to the Senate. I have complete confidence, it goes without saying, that everything will be conducted above board and with the transparency that we should rightfully expect.

But, in Quebec, these people would not be selected to carry out such a task. Quebec will select truly independent investigators, who will probe the real wounds. If the wounds are infected, they will be lanced, and the infection will be drained off. I invite my Liberal colleagues opposite to reconsider their decision. If you are blameless, my friends, you have no reason to be afraid. Establish a royal commission of inquiry into the privatization of the Pearson airport. It would appear, however, that both parties, blue and red, are equally involved in this privatization. The numbers would appear to be the same on both sides, and, of course, they are. The situation is a bit like what happens with the leaves at this time of the year. When the wind blows, they turn over and their colour changes. When the blues are close to power, they change colour; when the reds are, they change colour too.

If the party that is currently running the country is blameless, it has nothing to fear. Let it establish a commission of inquiry, following the government of Quebec's proper lead.

• (1035)

To come back to Bill C-75, the federal government's entry criteria are not always what the provinces want. Federal agencies can therefore end up competing with provincial agencies, which may have different criteria.

Here again, rather than eliminate overlap and give the provinces what is rightly theirs, the federal government is insisting on keeping everything for itself.

By keeping the overlap, the federal government reserves the opportunity to intervene in the way we manage our agricultural sector in Quebec.

It is very odd, I must point out, for the department to administer this legislation rather than the Farm Credit Corporation. Although the programs differ, the Farm Credit Corporation already guarantees loans. This, I repeat, is another striking example of administrative duplication. We are not talking any more just of duplication among different governments but duplication within in a single government.

With this duplication, the deficit continues to grow. When we reach the point of paying \$40 billion a year just to cover the interest costs of the debt, and the deficit is likely to reach \$25 or \$26 billion, we are entitled to question previous administrations.