

*Government Orders*

financing agencies or individuals directly. It is also a government which is bypassing the provinces, dealing directly with municipal governments, even though, under the 1867 Constitution, they come under the authority of provincial governments.

Finally, Bill C-48 confirms that this government could not care less about the claims of Quebec and the provinces and that it intends, as much as possible, to disregard the Constitution which governs us, in order to act as it pleases and achieve its ends, no matter what the cost to taxpayers in Quebec and this country.

I will bet that many of my colleagues from the other provinces agree with me. I will bet that many of my colleagues opposite think the same way but will never dare come out into the open about it, for fear of being repudiated by their own government. Let me tell them any way that such unsolicited federal interventions in a provincial area of jurisdiction cause awful overlapping all over the place.

We are going through difficult economic times. The provinces already have long-established natural resources strategies. What is the federal government doing if not duplicating whatever is already there? I am sure that Canadian taxpayers, to whom this government is so committed, would not approve of this. If they were asked tomorrow if they agreed with paying double for the sake of satisfying this government's centralizing designs, I know what they would say. Their answer would be a clear one. I am sure that they would never agree that the current Liberal government act this way. As far as we, in Quebec, are concerned, it goes without saying that we will not accept this disgraceful luxury of paying double all the time.

Let me give you an example with respect to forest management, over which this government is unduly assuming power by establishing the Department of Natural Resources. The provincial strategy tabled by the government of Quebec in May 1994 illustrates my point. This strategy is well and truly independent from the National Forest Strategy developed by the federal government and the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. The people of Quebec have to pay for both strategies. The people from my riding have to pay for both. We are sick and tired of that.

This government completely disregards the Constitution that governs it. It has also completely disregarded the very legitimate demands of all Quebecers for at least 30 years. The time has come for Quebecers to make a decision that will allow them to finally exercise the powers they are entitled to.

• (1605)

In November 1990, the House Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries, although made up of hard-core federalists, said

that in the 20th century, the government tried several times to influence national forestry policies, but that it encountered provincial resistance to any potential interference in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Committee members felt that the federal government clearly had to play a much more serious role in guaranteeing the success of any national forestry policy.

We must come to the conclusion that the current government has not learned anything from the past. We also note that, although many observers recommended that the federal government take the Constitution into account in dealing with natural resources, this government continues to display the same interfering and contemptuous attitude toward a level of government which nonetheless has jurisdiction over natural resources. Quebec has always demanded the same powers over natural resources and forestry. Quebec was opposed to creating the Department of Forestry, which it rightly saw as federal interference in an area of provincial jurisdiction.

Quebec also did not ratify the National Forest Strategy. Since 1991, after the resounding failure of the Meech Lake Accord, no Quebec minister has participated in the activities of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. In fact, Quebec just recently released its own strategy on forest management. It is certainly its prerogative, considering that this sector falls under provincial jurisdiction.

We will never support Bill C-48. We will never tolerate this undue and unacceptable interference in a field of provincial jurisdiction. I am not just referring to Quebec but also to the other provinces. We will never tolerate this unjustifiable desire to deprive another level of government of its vested powers. As Bloc Quebecois members, we will never support this kind of action.

Nor will taxpayers, and particularly those in my riding of Matapédia—Matane, ever let those who govern waste public money by duplicating services. As the elected representatives of Quebecers, we will never let the government ruin the efforts of generations of Quebecers to develop their natural resources the way they wanted to do it.

I hope that members will seriously consider the implications of this bill and will send the government back to the drawing board. If necessary, I will be pleased to make my plea again and again, because the government does not have the right to resort to useless duplication in order to gain some specific power. Since it took office, this government has been centralizing over and over. This legislation is yet another attempt to gnaw away at the powers of Quebec and the other provinces. The government is increasingly bent on gaining power, instead of trying to manage taxpayers' money. The Bloc Quebecois will oppose any such attempt to gain power.