

[English]

Contrary to what Senator Kirby predicts, there will be national social programs. There will be national objectives. Dare I use the word national standards? Why not? The difference will be that these will be arrived at in negotiations between the federal government and the provinces in whose exclusive jurisdiction these fields are. They will not be imposed by Ottawa. In a country as vast and as diversified as ours, the provinces must be free to establish their own priorities in these fields which are within their exclusive jurisdiction and to tailor federal-provincial programs to their particular needs and circumstances without having decisions imposed on them by the federal government.

I think it is a matter of regret that so much of the discourse of federal politicians in this and other constitutional debates has a tendency to denigrate provincial governments and legislatures. Provincial legislators have to get elected. They are responsible to their voters. It seems to me that we have to show somewhat more respect for their sovereign authority in their own fields. Who says, for example, that the federal government or Parliament is the fount of all wisdom when it comes to progressive social policy? Medicare is the example which is so often referred to here. Although I recall it was in the Liberal platform of 1919, the first medicare program we had in this country was brought in by the NDP government of Saskatchewan.

Neither do I agree with Senator Kirby's apprehensions and those of Senator Graham expressed earlier today about manpower training in the hands of the provinces. I think they under-estimate the creative and innovative capacity of provinces when it comes to policy and programs in these fields. Senator Kirby feels that, without federal supervision, the provinces will fall back on training for their traditional economic activities, thus marginalizing their work force and impeding the mobility of their young people. Is it not also possible that skills training, integrated with education, placement, social services and economic development in a provincial regime, will provide more and better opportunities for the individual? Is it not also possible that provincial governments will use skills training to help promote investment in new economic development opportunities in the province? Is it not possible, so long as we try to level the playing field, as they say, by equalization, that some more competition among provinces in these fields will be healthy?

In any case, I have to remind Senator Kirby, Senator Graham and others who have brought up this subject that there is a stipulation in the Charlottetown consensus that at the request of any province not wishing the federal government to withdraw from labour market training, the federal government would be required to negotiate an agreement to maintain its

[Senator Murray.]

labour market training and development programs in that province.

• (1920)

Finally, Senator Austin said, as reported at page 1990 of *Debates of the Senate*:

In the Charlottetown accord we have created parallel structures that weaken this Parliament. We have a regime of premiers who are also now part of the national government of this country although they are not elected nationally. In the Charlottetown accord we have agreed that we will have a separate system of consensus outside of this Parliament with respect to the structures and many of the policies that will affect the running of this country. I think that weakens Canada.

Honourable senators, I do not know how we are to coordinate education, training, social programs and so forth, if it is not by federal-provincial collaboration. How are we to remove these interprovincial trade barriers which Senator Sparrow and others have mentioned if it is not by concerted action? How will we implement some of the international treaties that the federal government enters into, whether in trade, environment or human rights, without provincial collaboration because so much of the provisions of those treaties affect provincial jurisdiction?

This is a federation. We do have shared sovereignty. The provinces are sovereign in some areas. We all have to work together.

Senator Austin described his province of British Columbia and British Columbians when he said:

British Columbians have a sense of themselves as an expanding province, as a province which is Canada's gateway to the Pacific and Canada's western province in the north-south axis of North America.

He also stated:

There has been a strong movement in the Province of British Columbia . . . to develop regional ties, to reduce barriers in trade and the movement of peoples and to reduce the qualitative legal barriers that domestic laws on both sides of the border have created, so as to allow the development of a new sense of society, and of course more active commerce.

He is describing the uniqueness and the distinctiveness of British Columbia and its economy, as well as British Columbian society and the aspirations of its citizens.

I should point out that the Charlottetown consensus, among other things, will give British Columbia, if it wants, more control over immigration. British Columbia, if it wants, will have more control over manpower training. If it wishes, we, the federal government, can butt out of some of the provincial jurisdictions such as forestry, tourism, mining, recreation and regional development.