

Mr. Pronovost: —all our competitors on the international scene, including the Italians.

As part of our latest prosperity initiative, we are consulting on the subject of education and training throughout the country, including in Quebec. All the stakeholders in the learning system are invited to discuss the national goals in this regard. This action plan will call upon all levels of government, the private sector, the workers, the teachers as well as all Canadians.

We are firmly committed to building a world-class labour force and we are on the right track, but this is no small task. A recent survey by the Hudson institute shows that 66 per cent of businesses expect problems in recruiting personnel with technical skills by 1996. Employment and Immigration Canada reported that 300,000 jobs were not filled in 1991 due to a shortage of skilled workers. This problem is as prevalent in Quebec as in the rest of Canada. It is nation-wide.

I will end, although I would have much more to say, by saying that I can assure all Quebecers and all Canadians that this government is looking into these problems very seriously. As a matter of fact, we are in the process of developing, in conjunction with the provinces, the communities and the major stakeholders, an action plan to enable every Canadian to meet the learning standards required to maintain and increase our standard of living in the years to come. Our economic survival as a nation depends on this initiative.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to thank my two colleagues for their comments on this bill. I support most of these arguments. What I will try to do now is add a few details and explain my point of view.

[*English*]

We are here to discuss the possibility of establishing a Canadian council on education that would be funded by governments and the private sector, that would provide independent research and policy advice on education for governments in the development and implementation of national goals and education.

[*Translation*]

This will not be easy if we really want to meet this objective. I happen to be in favour of respecting provin-

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cial jurisdiction over education. I have no problem with this, because it has always been my policy, even when I was deputy minister, and I maintain that view. But there is no law against co-operation, and I would even say it is absolutely essential. Take Europe, for instance. In Europe we have a large number of countries with different languages which realized they had to co-operate, they had to work together. Why? To strengthen their assets, to give their people a better education, to ensure that their training and upgrading programs and research and development projects are among the best in the world.

You may have guessed I support this particular trend.

[*English*]

I support it. It is in line with two of the policy papers I have developed with the help of some colleagues. It is also in agreement with some of the comments and some of the initiatives that my colleague, the member for Ottawa Centre, has undertaken.

• (1930)

Why do I support it? I have already mentioned that I think it is essential to co-operate and co-operation does not mean threatening anyone's autonomy. Quite to the contrary, I think it respects it.

There is a relationship between education and prosperity. If you look at the high standards of living in the world, you will find some important investments in education broadly defined: training, retraining, research and development, additional impetus, a focus on the sciences and technologies. So there is that relationship and we need to be aware of it. We may not like it, but it is real.

If we want to be leaders as opposed to followers, we really have no choice. We are living in a changing world. I am not always particularly enthralled with all of the changes, but they are there and I think it would be irresponsible to suggest otherwise. We talk about—

[*Translation*]

—globalization, but what does it mean? We talk about it a lot, but what does it mean to us? We have to study these issues. We have to understand what is involved. We all know that despite the tremendous progress made in certain countries, there is far too much poverty in the world, especially among young people.