

*Office of Education*

operation which takes place among the provinces in order to effect standards and upgrade educational programs, and the heavy-handed action which might be taken by a central government.

When the hon. member indicated that education is too important to be concerned about jurisdictional responsibility, he identified very clearly his lack of understanding as to how a federal-provincial system can work effectively in this country. Perhaps he reflects inadvertently some of the attitudes of his own political masters which have made life increasingly difficult for there to be, in real terms, both a federal government and provincial governments that can work together. The suggestions put forward by the hon. member in his motion and in his comments this afternoon would even further exacerbate present relations among the federal government and the provinces.

While I might identify with his concerns about the quality and the standard of education in this country, the action he proposes would not be effective in the final analysis. The hon. member did not refer to the fact that there is no way to be assured that the results he hopes to achieve would, in effect, occur. We should be concerned about the process of education as it operates in this country, not just for young people but in general terms, because education is a large component of our society.

I do not think the answer is in the establishment of a federal office of education. It might be better if we were able to understand some of the real problems being confronted today by the provincial governments. When the hon. member suggests that we should think about this as a tool for alleviating regional disparity, I think of some of the situations which have existed in my part of the world where the federal government, for reasons best known to itself, has made plans and introduced programs which were not related to the existing needs.

I hope this process of discussion during private members' hour will provide the members of this House the opportunity to realize that it is a federal system we have in this country, and it will not function effectively as long as we have the kind of recourse to unwarranted intrusions and the kind of waiving aside of provincial jurisdictions that are part of the basic fabric of this country. This is the only way we can effectively understand the various viewpoints of the regions and the various ways in which the disparate views and disparate approaches which exist in Canada can possibly be reconciled together into a workable Canadian federation. We have to be grateful to the hon. member for the opportunity of discussing those questions once again, but I cannot support in any way, shape or form the motion as it is presented.

**Mr. D. M. Collette (York East):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I participate in the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert). I am quite sympathetic with the basic thrust of the motion, although I would prefer it to be worded in a somewhat different manner. I will in due course explain my reasons for saying that. As Your Honour will remember, I rose second in the debate and you recognized a Conservative speaker. But I am glad to have had

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

the benefits of the arguments of the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald), because he did not address himself to the substance of the motion of the hon. member for Vaudreuil as it appears before us. He gave us what is now a very traditional Conservative lecture on federal-provincial relations and told us how this terrible government is breaking up the country by virtue of the fact that it is stealing power from the provinces. Having served with the hon. member for Egmont on a number of delegations, and having worked with him in the House, I expected better from him this afternoon on what I consider to be a very significant motion.

● (1722)

One hundred years ago I believe that the Fathers of Confederation made a terrible mistake when they gave, in section 91 or 92 of the BNA Act, jurisdiction over education to the provinces. Of course, one should not second-guess the reasons of the Fathers of Confederation, and it is pretty easy to apply hindsight in such matters. But in those days they were probably justified, and I think they wrote a pretty good document anyway, so we can excuse them this one mistake. Nevertheless, it was a terrible mistake, for a couple of reasons. The first one has to do with the hon. member's motion, and it is that by virtue of the fact that each province was allowed to pursue its own path in education, we see variable approaches to second language teaching in the provinces.

Second, the fact that the provinces have power in matters of education has resulted in ten different sets of educational standards and has had, I believe, an adverse impact upon the labour needs of the twentieth century. I will go into that argument in a few moments. It is only with the election of the PQ last November that we have suddenly really concerned ourselves with minority language rights. I was a product of the Ontario school system. The second language training that I got in that system was very poor. In fact, the government of Ontario has perhaps one of the most abysmal records with respect to second language teaching, and it is abysmal for a significant reason.

The province of Ontario and the province of Quebec, Upper and Lower Canada—or Canada east and Canada west, as they were 100 years ago—were the two linchpins that formed this country. Yet successive governments in Ontario—the Liberal government was in power there for many years under Oliver Mowat, there was a farmers' government, and in the last 35 years since 1943 the PC party has been in government in that province, the same party as that of my friend, the hon. member for Egmont—have behaved like ostriches with respect to language rights in this country.

About ten years ago we had the national unity debate, we had the B and B commission and we had great discussions on the problems of Quebec and the feelings of Francophones that they were not being properly fulfilled within the Canadian confederation. In 1967, the Conservative premier of Ontario received a lot of publicity when he initiated the Confederation for Tomorrow Conference. In those ten years you would have thought the Conservative administration in Ontario would