

Proposed Adult Education Council

I would suggest that the word "education" cannot be restricted to the activities in schools, in the ordinary sense. It embraces much more, and all the authorities consider education to have a much wider meaning which would embrace every endeavour and matter relating to the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge that people, as well as civilization could undertake. In this sense one could include as part of education what is regarded as civilization. However, this very wide meaning I would suggest is not the meaning attributed to the word used in the B.N.A. Act. If we were to use this as the basis of our thinking it would give ample justification to the continuing involvement of the federal government in the field of education and at the same time it would not interfere with those fundamental rights of the provinces.

I suggest that perhaps some people are too sensitive about those rights, but they are overlooking the great national need when they try to make education a purely provincial matter. I appeal to all those who are interested in the advancement of this country to seek to co-operate and see to it that education is not a matter of one jurisdiction or another but is a matter of co-operation in such a way that the fundamental rights within the provinces are not affected. Therefore I suggest that the resolution brought forward has fair, legal justification.

I should also like to point out that there is a danger if we do not at some time take steps to set up either this or some other vehicle whereby there is co-operation between the provinces and the dominion in respect of education. At the present time under the system of assistance to vocational and technical training we set up certain conditions under which the provinces may receive grants in respect of training. The emphasis is on training. I think there is a danger of the provinces setting up institutions purely and simply to become qualified to receive federal grants and perhaps have within their province two systems of education, one in training and the other in general education. That is a danger that has been expressed in various parts of the country. This is a danger that could be increased if the federal grants are given on certain conditions which do not particularly meet provincial requirements.

I suggest therefore that if we do not have a body set up as is described in this resolution, perhaps the time has come—and I say this with some trepidation that I might be misunderstood in certain sections of this country—when within the federal set up there should be a department within one of our present departments co-ordinating all the educational grants and assistance we are now

giving to the provinces. That department would be able to work in co-operation as an arbitrator, not an arbitrator in the sense of deciding what should be done but in bringing together the various provincial groups and trying to learn from them what we can do best without interfering with their local autonomy.

The manifestations of that need are shown clearly in organizations such as C.E.A., which has been operating for many years on the basis that all the educational authorities of the provinces get together and discuss the educational problems of the nation. It places no responsibility as to the decisions to be made but acts purely in a co-operative capacity. The Canadian conference of education is another manifestation of this need. These purposes could be fulfilled in an official capacity under one of the departments of the government and without interfering with the local autonomy of the provinces.

I hope that measures such as this will point up that need and bring about a much needed reorganization, a much needed reassessment of our attitudes toward education in this country, because we cannot grow as a nation if we remain provincially minded; we must think in terms of a Canadian nation. We talk of our material resources. We must also talk in terms of our human resources, and these human resources should not be limited because of narrow-bound, provincial attitudes toward education.

I think there is perhaps a fundamental right involved here when persons and families want to get the best education possible. These rights, these desires should not be hindered because of narrow provincialism. The best can be obtained by the co-operation of all people interested in education.

Mr. Crestohl: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Morton: Yes.

Mr. Crestohl: Are we to understand from the hon. member's observations that he is recommending federal control of provincial institutions in the way they spend their money on education?

Mr. Morton: If the hon. member had been listening he would know that not only did I not say that but I carefully pointed out that we would not interfere with the local autonomy of the provinces, that it is a matter of co-operation. I think that the type of question the hon. member has asked is a hindrance to education in this country. The time has come when we had better grow up and stop making politics a basis for our decisions in education. It is people like that who prevent progress in education; they think only in terms