

Private Bills

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, at the present time, the Canadian universities and colleges foundation distributes subsidies to the amount of \$1.50 or \$2 per capita to universities, but only to the universities in the nine English provinces in Canada, and not to those of the province of Quebec.

Under Bill No. S-36, will the association of universities and colleges of Canada hold special privileges to do the same in the province of Quebec as the foundation did in the other provinces?

On the other hand, will the provincial privileges not be infringed upon through the incorporation of the association of universities and colleges of Canada?

[Text]

Miss Jewett: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member can rest assured that the arrangement whereby the per capita grants are distributed to universities in the province of Quebec, in a way which is different from the way they are distributed in the rest of the country, will remain unchanged. As the hon. member knows, the per capita grants are now distributed to all universities in Canada, except those in the province of Quebec, through the Canadian universities foundation, and they will continue to be so distributed. Under the new legislation the distribution of these grants to the universities in the province of Quebec will continue in exactly the same way as they have been distributed since 1960.

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, one last question. Will the federal government give any other subsidies or grants whatsoever to the association of universities and colleges of Canada, which will allocate them to the universities and colleges of the province of Quebec? Can the hon. member give us any assurance in that respect?

[Text]

Miss Jewett: Mr. Chairman, unless the parliament of Canada decided that there should be further grants, what the hon. gentleman says is quite correct.

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Could the parliament of Canada then decide to grant subsidies to the association of universities and colleges of Canada so that they might revert to Quebec colleges and universities?

I feel that if this new piece of legislation enabled the federal government to pass

[Miss Jewett.]

through a new corporation in order to distribute subsidies to colleges and universities, this would constitute a serious breach of the privileges granted to the province of Quebec under section 93 of the British North America Act. That is why we would object to it; but if the hon. member can assure us that this association will not be used to infringe upon the rights of the provinces in the field of education, we shall allow Bill No. S-36 to be passed. If, however, the federal government took the liberty, through this new association or corporation, to distribute subsidies to Quebec colleges and universities, we would like the hon. member to say so, because then we would raise strong objections.

[Text]

Miss Jewett: Mr. Chairman, this association is made up of all the universities and colleges in Canada, including French speaking universities and colleges, which are eligible, and I am quite sure that these institutions, whether English or French speaking, would be the last ones to do anything which would in any way take away from the legitimate and rightful powers of government, even if they were capable of doing so. For that reason I believe the hon. member is expressing a fear about a body which, in my view at any rate, is quite able itself to look after the kind of problem he raises. Since I have already stated that there is no additional power being granted by this legislation to this association, the hon. member can rest assured that the problems he has referred to are not substantial ones.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to get into the much broader question of provincial rights, or the interpretation which some members would make as to whether or not provincial rights are being encroached upon or invaded, but it has always seemed very strange to me that in respect of one province it is perfectly acceptable in principle or in theory to make grants directly or indirectly from the federal treasury to universities or through the predecessor of this organization which we are about to incorporate.

The Chairman: May I suggest to the hon. member that he is now embarking upon a field of discussion that is far beyond the very limited confines of clause 1 of this bill. It does not seem to me that this is the time to discuss the very large problem which he appears to be talking about, or attacking at this point.