

*Education*

been in operation at one time or another in Canada. Having said that, however, I want to emphasize that we are convinced the time has now come—as a matter of fact it is past due—when the national government, realizing the problems confronting school boards, municipalities and many of the provinces, should come forward willingly and voluntarily with substantial assistance towards education so that, as the resolution asserts, we can in the highest degree possible be successful in expanding and equalizing educational opportunity across Canada. We should recognize that it is not only certain members of the Canadian House of Commons who feel that such aid is necessary. The school boards and many of the provincial governments realize it. The people generally realize the need and are in hearty support of extending such assistance.

Sometime last year I received a copy of a resolution passed by the school trustees' association of Alberta, which certainly indicates the feeling of the trustees in my province and, I am sure, of those in the other provinces as well. It reads:

*Grants in Aid*

Whereas various educational bodies in all provinces are concerned with the inequality of educational opportunities throughout the nation, and

Whereas the present sources of finances are insufficient;

Therefore be it resolved that we ask the federal government to give grants in aid in order that the provinces may be able to provide equality of educational opportunity.

In my remarks today, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to repeat many of the things I said last May, when I believe I occupied most of the time allotted to me in dealing with this subject. In view of that fact, and in view of the fact that in his speech during the debate on the address in reply last year my leader laid such stress on the general subject, it seems unnecessary for me to take more than just a few minutes. Last year the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) asserted that in his opinion nothing could contribute more to the internal security of Canada than a broad understanding on the part of her citizens; and that if democracy is to function successfully, yielding the results the people desire from the management of their affairs, there must be a high general level of achievement among the people.

We have pointed out from time to time that because of its very size and its widely varying resources and productive possibilities Canada has within its borders many areas in which incomes are much lower than in other areas. The degree of prosperity varies noticeably from province to province and even from municipality to municipality. Municipalities raise their revenue from taxes on real property, which in itself leads to a wide diverg-

[Mr. Shaw.]

ence of opportunity. In areas of particularly low production, where incomes are necessarily small, there is much less opportunity for boys and girls than would be found in areas where production is high and incomes are likewise high. The municipalities, from which the school boards acquire a substantial part of the money to meet the cost of education, are today drawing in excess of 70 per cent of their taxes from real property. That being so, certainly the revenue available to a municipal council in an area where conditions are not of the best is not sufficient to provide adequate educational opportunities, and the kiddies suffer as a result. The sponsor of this resolution indicated his firm conviction that we have nothing even remotely approaching equality of educational opportunity. Certainly I can subscribe to that after the years I spent in rather isolated communities doing my part, as a teacher, to assist in the work of education.

We fully realize that the revenues of provincial governments have been going up rapidly. It is also noticeable that an increasing percentage of provincial revenue is being devoted to educational purposes. The provincial governments are fully cognizant of the importance of education and are appropriating every available dollar for that purpose; but in most cases they are simply unable to meet the demand that must be met if we admit that equality of educational opportunity is a desirable objective.

Reference has been made to the salaries of teachers. Last year I pointed out that in the last five years in particular the situation has greatly improved in regard to these salaries. As a matter of fact in some provinces the average salary has doubled. But having spent a number of years in the profession no one can kid me into believing that we are yet even approaching the standard of salaries to which teachers are entitled. When you have regard to the training necessary; when you have regard to the importance of the work and compare their salaries with what others are earning—even common labourers, in many cases—I am sure it will be agreed that teachers are still notoriously underpaid. In fact, my own experience was such that but for the conviction that I was doing a valuable job of work with our youngsters I believe I would have quit and taken a job as a sheep herder. I would have had much less to worry about. Of course what kept me at it was my personal conviction that I was doing a service in endeavouring as best I could to make my youngsters good future citizens.

Then reference was made to the cost of construction. I daresay that capital costs of schools have increased by from 75 to 100 per cent, depending upon where the construction