

children to alleviate interprovincial educational disparities. The federal government has a specific financial obligation to education, and to establish a system of equalization grants which will enable each province to provide an adequate and comparable standard of education for every child in this country.

A 1975 report of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development dealt at considerable length with educational policy in Canada, and the minister of education of the province of Ontario, the Hon. Tom Wells, was in general agreement with the need for national action. Section 93 of the British North America Act states that in and for each province the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education. Thus, Canada has developed a rather unplanned and until now problematical educational policy, though perhaps it could not be termed truly serious, something people are concerned about, in view of developments at the present time.

● (1712)

Nevertheless, it is a fact that school board expenditures per child in Ontario exceed comparable expenditures in the maritimes by almost 70 per cent. Surely, the federal government is already deeply involved. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is very much involved in education. The Department of the Secretary of State, as it applies to national libraries and museums, spends large sums on education. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion spends large sums supporting educational facilities. The Department of External Affairs is involved directly. The Department of National Defence is directly involved in education, as is the Department of National Health and Welfare and the department of manpower and immigration, now the Department of Employment and Immigration.

Presently, the federal government is spending well over \$3 billion a year in support of education in various forms. Arguments concerning jurisdictional responsibility are too often politically motivated. Surely, education is too important to be treated in this fashion.

The motion makes no attempt to go beyond the present acknowledged jurisdictional responsibilities of the federal government. Federal financial assistance for second language training is already provided, although many of us are distinctly unhappy with the terms of the agreement under which this assistance is provided. Education is a national priority. The support of all parties has been given to similar previous motions. Therefore, I ask that everyone join me this afternoon in an expression of national unity by approving the motion calling upon the government to consider the establishment of an office of education.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. It is my understanding that motion No. 2, standing in the name of the hon. member for Lévis (Mr. Guay), that motion No. 3 standing in the name of the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Friesen), that motion No. 4 standing in the name of the

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hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis), and notice of motion No. 5 standing in the name of the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald), will be stood. Is that agreed.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I will not take too long dealing with this particular matter. I believe there are other members who may want to speak, and I look forward to their contributions to this suggestion brought forward by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert).

I was disappointed in the way this motion was presented and the defence or the explanation presented by the hon. member. His last expression of opinion with respect to taking this action on behalf of national unity shows how little he understands the problems of national unity which exist in this country today.

Mr. Herbert: I understand the situation very well.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I would appreciate it if the hon. member would extend to me the same courtesy which I extended to him. As one of the members of this House, I find this motion to be both contradictory and ill-considered. In its own way it represents, if I may say so, a further element of disunity with respect to something which has been basically a responsibility of the provinces since the beginning.

It is not really clear, from either the member's motion or his comments in the House this afternoon, whether he is trying to provide a resource to the provinces with respect to education, whether he is trying in a sense to take over some of the present powers or jurisdiction of the provincial governments—which seems to be implied in some way in his remarks—or whether he is trying to get at some of the present weaknesses with respect to federal funding for second language education in the provinces.

I would like to think there are some areas where the hon. member and I agree, and particularly I am thinking of his expression of dissatisfaction with respect to the effectiveness of provincial action in second language education. I am sure there are members on both sides of this House who are very much concerned about the manner in which hundreds of millions of dollars of federal money has been expended or made available to the provinces without any satisfactory development, in a number of instances and in a number of provinces, of an effective and helpful second language education program.

When the hon. member suggests that the federal government has the power to make a further intervention with respect to education in the provinces, that may well be the case, as has been exhibited by this government in other instances in terms of intervention. Whether it has the power is not really the question. The question is whether it has the right or whether it would be wise. When the hon. member talks about the need for national action, if I may say so, he confuses the real concern that all the provinces share with respect to their own educational resources, that is, the amount of co-