

Proposed Adult Education Council

education or vocational education. I believe it is a mild form of academic snobbery and it would profit us if we could get rid of it completely. Nature is going to provide for those who will profit from university work, and I believe nature will provide for those who are able to benefit by technical work. But whatever form of training appears desirable, whether it is academic, technical or vocational, I believe training is needed by different types of Canadians in whatever work they do and in whatever field they make a living.

In many countries there is an increasing need at the present time for adult education, and I believe there is a growing respect for it. I hope in this country we shall also be able to develop an increased respect for vocational and technical education.

Looking back over the years I remember some of the work done in the field of adult education in this country. I am thinking of the work done in the St. Francis Xavier University of Nova Scotia, and of the work done by David Smith in Ontario. One could also think of the youth training program initiated by the federal government in the late 30's, and of the Vocational Training Co-ordination Act of 1942, federal aid to universities in 1952 and, in more recent times, the increased moneys which have been paid to universities and the increased attention which has been given to vocational and technical training.

Each province has now some form of adult education. However, there are many organizations and I believe it would be a good thing if some body or institution would promote research and offer advice and assistance in the further development of adult education. I have not given this matter sufficient thought to decide whether or not there should be a separate body or whether it should be a body within the organization of the Canadian associations for adult education. I have not settled in my own mind what the proper place for such a body should be but, in general, I do agree with the idea put forward by the hon. member for Peterborough.

Mr. M. D. Morton (Davenport): I believe this is a very important resolution as it brings before the house two important needs. One is the need of adult education itself, because it has been estimated that over seven million adult Canadians have never finished high school. In these days of changing patterns of jobs, many of us have noticed the difficulty of obtaining jobs for these people who have not had training. This pattern has created a crisis, but I do not say that adult education should primarily be

designed towards the obtaining of jobs. It is much broader than that, but this is one aspect which has created the present crisis.

It also points out the problem arising in Canada regarding the need for co-ordinating the various educational activities. The reason the federal government has had to play an increasing role in education is that education has changed and expanded. It is because, since the days of the B.N.A. Act, it has become so interwoven in our national affairs that it can no longer be considered as only a matter for the provinces. Basically, of course, under the constitution it is the responsibility of the provinces, and I would like to deal for a moment with the constitutional aspect because it is a problem in many parts of the country.

I think we still believe that education is basically the responsibility of the provinces. It was made so under section 93 of the British North America Act in order to protect the rights of minorities. At that time it was also felt that education could be better dealt with from a local level and that financing of education could be better cared for by taxing the land. But, if we look at education at that time and at the expanded meaning of education today, I think we can find the basis of a broader meaning of education without restricting it to being dealt with as a provincial matter.

At that time I would suggest the term education was based on teacher-pupil instruction but, because of the importance of education on a national basis, we have seen the development in which the federal government has had to bring about instruction in the field of agriculture and in technical and vocational training, and in our armed forces where we have provisions by which education is available to many of those who have taken training. We have also many departments within the federal government by which aid is being given to education. Therefore I would suggest that when we are looking at this from a legal point of view we would be wrong in saying that today we must accept the narrow interpretation of education which was applied to it in the days of confederation. I would suggest that the cases, if they were studied very carefully—and I have not the time this afternoon to develop that—would indicate that a broader definition of education would be accepted by our courts in order to validate all that has been done.

I know there is the extreme view that education is entirely a matter for the provinces, and that even money raised and spent on education by the federal government is provided unconstitutionally. However, I believe that is not the prevailing feeling today.