

Federal-Provincial Arrangements Act

Code amendments, keeping in mind that at any point I might call the amendment to the British North America Act which has been at the front of the program for several days. In referring to the Criminal Code amendments, I have in mind the hijacking bill and the bill on privacy. Next week, Mr. Speaker, the allotted days will be Tuesday and Thursday.

The proposed tentative date for the beginning of the Easter recess is the Wednesday prior to Easter Sunday, which I think is March 29. The date of our return is not yet clear, but it will certainly not be sooner than April 10 and possibly later. In exchange for all that information, Mr. Speaker, perhaps my hon. friend will tell me which day next week he intends to be the opposition voting day.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, it is a matter to which I will give serious thought and make my decision known in due course.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Arrogance.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT, 1972

AUTHORIZATION OF FISCAL PAYMENTS TO AND TAX COLLECTION AGREEMENTS WITH PROVINCES

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-8, to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces, and to amend the Established Programs (Interim Arrangements) Act, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West) moved motion No. 1 as follows:

That Bill C-8, an act to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces, and to amend the Established Programs (Interim Arrangements) Act, be amended by deleting from clause 32 paragraph (a), subparagraphs (iii), (iv), (v) and paragraph (g).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have arranged to exchange with my colleague the order of speaking. Because of pressing arrangements he would like to speak now on the amendment I have moved.

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House, and I shall not be very long. There are a couple of points we should keep in mind concerning Bill C-8. The Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs had not only the benefit of hearing the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) but the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) and the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada when the Committee was considering this bill.

There have been and continue to be national goals in post-secondary education. I suggest that we must be very

[Mr. MacEachen.]

careful to nurture and foster this national emphasis. Your Honour will be glad to know that the length of my speech will have no bearing whatever on the earnestness and seriousness with which I view future federal involvement in this field. I am uneasy about the government of Canada turning away from its obligations to our universities and colleges. This will have very great implications on the future of post-secondary education in our country. The policy of assisting universities with capital and operating grants may not be the best method the government of Canada can adopt, but it is better than a mere transfer of income tax points which would have the effect of leaving each province on its own in the university sphere.

It would be pointless to reargue or rehash the point I tried to make the other day about section 93 of the British North America Act which in its proviso states very clearly, if I can put it that way, "in and for each province the legislature may". Then there follows a series of things it can do in the field of education. I do not for one minute want anyone to think I wish to interfere in any way, by argument, policy or philosophy, with the fundamental right of the provinces in the field of education, particularly at the level of the school curricula, and so on. However, I suggest that when the Fathers of Confederation framed the constitutional provisions that make up the British North America Act there were no such things, with two very noteworthy exceptions, as universities transcending provincial boundaries. I do not think universities have an international boundary, let alone a provincial one.

This whole question has been eloquently discussed time after time by Dr. J. A. Corry who was an adviser to the office of the Secretary of State on the matter of post-secondary education. Also, this policy was inherent in the adoption by the government of Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson of the formula of which this bill is really nothing more than an expansion. I feel that in this stage of our constitutional evaluation it would be a very good idea to have an educational council in this country, in no way diminishing the basic and fundamental constitutional rights of the provinces but, rather, acting as a clearing house for essential information, an exchange of views, and so on, in education.

I think it is seven years ago that the Bladen commission carried out a very worth-while study on the funding of higher education. Its studies have really been overcome by events. I respectfully suggest that during the next 24-month period, when we will have to develop a policy of federal aid to post-secondary education, would be an excellent time for the government of Canada, with the help and assistance of the provinces, to arrange for a new study on post-secondary education. This is really a plea for us not to get into a position of looking inward and looking provincially, if I can put it that way, in the field of post-secondary education.

• (1620)

Not all Canadians, despite the findings of the Wright commission, and perhaps this is a good thing for Canada, can be born, can be educated and can die in Ontario. This seems to be the philosophy of the Wright commission report. There are disquieting bits of evidence which lead one to the conclusion that despite the national goals so clearly enunciated and supported, I may say—and we