

*Supply—Privy Council*

can be such a thing as a bicultural situation. A person is a part of a culture, or he is not; it is not capable of division within an individual. The question of linguistic ability is something else.

The commission's latest report has in my submission invaded the constitutional jurisdiction of the provinces when it deals with the subject of education. To my mind this commission represents money wrongly spent, taxpayers' money spent on a royal commission which does nothing more than make recommendations concerning what the provinces should do in a field over which they have clear constitutional jurisdiction, namely, that of education. This jurisdiction is defended with great vigour by the very province which seems to have the greatest interest in the subjects placed before the commission. If anyone at the federal level were to say that Quebec should do certain things in connection with education it would immediately result in a reaction from the various authorities in Quebec who resent intrusion into this particular field. Yet we have spent millions of dollars on a royal commission whose recommendations infringe the jurisdiction over education which many provinces guard so jealously.

I shall not resort to the formality of voting against this item in the estimates when it is called. I read in the newspapers not long ago accounts of steady requests from this royal commission for an extension of time to permit it to continue its studies. I understand that these requests have so far been granted. But I think we should now tell the commission: Make your final report; we are giving you no more money; six or seven million dollars is sufficient for the study you were charged to make. Then we should let the matter rest, because in my opinion we are pouring money down the drain at this stage.

As I say, I shall not vote against the item, because there are a number of other expenditures included in it. I simply wish to express my disagreement with proposals to spend additional sums of money on a royal commission which so far has not made any suggestion that has been generally accepted, other than to say it is in favour of intrusion upon provincial jurisdiction relating to education.

It is possible to argue as to the value of other royal commissions, whether anything worth while comes of them. I simply wish to express the feeling that when the government appoints a royal commission it is in my view admitting, first of all, its inability to cope

[Mr. Howard (Skeena).]

with a particular problem and, second, that the vast resources of our public service, with all the scientists and experts it contains, are likewise insufficient to produce an answer. It seems to me we should not perpetuate a system whereby we spend millions of dollars upon what we consider to be the best professional minds available to us in Canada, and then say to them when we are faced with a knotty problem: We do not consider you are competent to deal with this matter; we shall set up some other group to cope with it. Generally speaking, money spent for this purpose is money wasted. Why cannot we employ the good minds which are available to us within the public service to find an answer to these questions rather than appoint royal commissions which in many cases come to nought and merely represent a source of additional expenditure? If the government is really serious about curtailing public expenditure I suggest this is one area in which it could exercise common sense and halt the squandering of the taxpayers' money.

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak for a few moments on the subject of ministers who are not available during the question period to answer questions raised by members on the opposition side of the house.

We all know that questions asked during the question period must be of immediate consequence and of national importance. If you look at the schedule, Mr. Chairman, outlining the days when ministers are supposed to be in the house to answer questions, you will find that the third minister on the list is the Secretary of State for External Affairs who holds about the most important portfolio of all. You will see that the Secretary of State for External Affairs is required to be in the house only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This means he is absent on Mondays and Fridays.

● (12:10 p.m.)

Matters that come up that fall under his jurisdiction are matters of great national and international importance. They are immediate questions, questions that require an answer right away. If today a question arises and it is immediate, as it must be to be recognized by the Chair, and it is asked of the Secretary of State for External Affairs today it cannot be answered until five days later, next Tuesday. That shows how ridiculous this whole system is because by next Tuesday that question will be as dead as yesterday's newspapers.