

Education

first and above all in order to meet the needs of an area, the immediate needs of families and those of the local economy.

Now, I recognize that the Canadian population is becoming more and more mobile and that a 15 year old boy who is now attending school may expect, when he has reached a certain level of technical training, for instance, to move his family no fewer than three or four times before he reaches the age of 65. That is what statisticians tell us. So, it would not be a bad thing if the provinces—and I do mean the provinces—would agree to establish uniform standards so that the student might bring from one province to the other a basic knowledge enabling him to be up to date should his family move for some reason.

● (1650)

Now, on the subject of standards, there is also talk about equality but the imposition of national standards would not necessarily result in equality, for instance as far as bilingualism and access to education in the language of one's choice are concerned. I know quite well that in New Brunswick, as is often said, spoken or taught French is perhaps not of the same quality as that taught in Quebec but we are getting closer and closer precisely because of the help provided by Quebec for the teaching of the French language in our province.

But in New Brunswick we have passed the stage where so-called bilingual education all boiled down to studying French as such. Nowadays in New Brunswick a student can take courses in his mother tongue from grade one to grade 12 inclusive. The province of Quebec also helped enormously our young graduates from New Brunswick colleges by admitting them to its faculties of medicine, dentistry and optometry. That contribution of the province of Quebec to New Brunswick youth is beyond value. Coming back to my hon. friend from Gander-Twillingate who said that the education system in the province of Quebec was quite retarded, I think that it is in great need of a boost, I must say that he is not entirely correct. I am not in a position to make comparisons between provinces. I do not want to make any with his province of Newfoundland. For that matter, he warned me not to make any but I must admit that Quebec universities offer an education whose value is recognized throughout the world and that is certainly being appreciated by thousands of French-speaking people in New Brunswick who did not have those institutions at home and who availed themselves of the good offices of the government of the province of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be the one to kill this motion. Still, I would like to add a few words. In principle, I am not against holding a national conference on education, but I fail to see what it would accomplish for the simple reason that the provinces are going to put their foot down and tell the central government "Mind your own business!" If you have money to give us, fine, we will accept it, but don't you dare tell us what to do at home. If our constitution were more flexible, of course we could speak of greater co-operation. I hope the Canadian constitution—at long last—evolves to the point where it will recognize that there are some weaknesses to be corrected today which did not exist 105 years ago, especially in the field of education.

[Mr. Corbin.]

In principle, I do feel that, in the case of a conference on the constitution, the federal and provincial governments should try to find common grounds for an agreement on changing the constitution so as to achieve the objectives advocated by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate; but, for the time being, thinking of it is useless: it is simply unthinkable.

In addition, many an example can be given to illustrate today's abuses in federal and provincial government relations in the field of education. For instance, the federal government has poured millions of dollars since 1971, towards the teaching of the language of the minority, the second language. It grants subsidies to the provincial governments which, to this day, are not required to account for the use of funds granted according to a predetermined formula to which they have agreed.

Fortunately, thanks to the representations made by members from New Brunswick, Ontario and others, the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) obtained this summer that the province of New Brunswick account for the spending of these grants so that the taxpayers may know whether they served the purposes for which they were granted. So, New Brunswick complied with this request of the federal government and from now on for the next fiscal years, it will account for the spending of these sums of money.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks. I would have liked to do a bit more research. Nevertheless, I think that, after all, I expressed the substance of my thoughts. The doubts that I have voiced are justified, I think, because I feel to see what could be accomplished in the present constitutional context through a national conference on education and human resources.

Mrs. Albanie Morin (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan) have particularly drawn my attention.

He mentioned our educational system in Quebec and nearly accused it of being responsible for all the province's problems for the last 30 years.

An hon. Member: This is not new.

Mrs. Morin: It is true that the Quebec system has many faults, but there have been many changes since the presentation of the Parent report and I would like to tell you about them.

In the past, our system included three main categories: the traditional classical studies, the business studies and the technical studies. The greatest difficulty was the fact that it was impossible to go from one system to another. If a youth started his classical studies and failed at the grade 10 or 11 level, his career and his whole life were ruined. If he could not change over to science or business studies, he was through. The same applied to the youth who started business studies; he could not register in any of the university schools and the same was true in the case of the student registering in a technical course: there was but one field open to him: trades or technical sciences.

Then, the Parent Report suggested great changes. Nowadays, the student completes the same courses up to grade