

National Education Standards

In addition to considering the interchange of educational levels from province to province, we might give some thought to the interchangeability of teaching services. I see no reason why a teacher should not be able to move, freely across provincial boundaries. For example, if a person wishes to teach in my own province of British Columbia rather than in the hon. member's province of Nova Scotia, he should be free to do so.

Mr. Woolliams: It would be quite a benefit.

Mr. Rose: The contempt shown by some provinces for certificates issued by others is something we could do without. I support the concept dealt with by the hon. member in his explanation, but I do not support what the hon. member has put down in the written part of his motion as it appears in *Routine Proceedings and Orders of the Day*. Nevertheless, he has explained his proposal satisfactorily to me and in these circumstances I think the conference he proposes would be a tremendous step in the right direction. Incidentally, the hon. member may not know this but there has been a secretariat of ministers of education in existence for the last three or four years. It is not the most energetic body in the world, and if it has done anything in that period it has failed to impress me by what it may have accomplished.

Mr. D. Gordon Blair (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief because I know other hon. members wish to speak, including the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams.)

I had the privilege of speaking on this subject when it was raised by the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau) last year. I simply wish to report to the House that the problem he has raised for our consideration today is a very practical and important one in Canada. We have an extremely mobile population and in the course of a lifetime many families move not only within provinces but from province to province. This presents an extremely serious situation for many of those who live in my constituency in the suburbs of Ottawa, members of the public service who are obliged by the nature of their occupation and in the service of their country to move from province to province. I have found in all my dealings with my constituents that one of the problems which is most real in their minds is that of the proper education of their children having regard to the fact that they must move from province to province.

My main reason for speaking in this debate is not to repeat what I said last year, but simply to report that our debate at that time struck a very responsive chord in my constituency and elsewhere in the country. I see the hon. member for South Western Nova nod his head; I am sure he received a similar response. I was amazed at the number of letters I received from people telling me about the difficulties they had encountered in the education of their children because of the necessity to move from one educational system to another.

I was delighted that the hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose) qualified his contribution toward the end of his remarks. I say this because there has been in the

discussion of the matter before us a certain academic prissiness; I might say, a degree of pedagogic rhetoric. The idea has been put forward that because there are new theories of pedagogy apparently designed to concentrate on the individual characteristics of each child, it would be a step backward for a conference to consider the better co-ordination of educational systems in this country. As the hon. member for South Western Nova made very clear, the mere fact that we now have new theories of pedagogy makes it all the more important there should be close co-ordination; children who move from one province which might still be operating under an old educational theory to another operating on the newer theory would suffer an even greater disadvantage.

I am not at all concerned whether we say that our aim is to secure more uniform standards, to establish what are called norms, to bring about co-ordination, or simply to recognize the fact that in Canada we have a unique problem arising from the extreme mobility of our population. The truth is that there is a problem which Parliament ought to recognize. It is not one just for pedagogues, boards of education or Members of Parliament; it is a problem for children whose education has been impeded—some of them, indeed, have suffered grave disadvantages likely to affect their future simply because we labour under a disorganized educational system.

In my opinion we should compliment the hon. member for South Western Nova on bringing this motion before us, and we should urge with all the force at our command that the proper authorities meet to consider what might be done.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I shall not speak at any length because in my opinion this motion is of such importance as to justify the House approving it before private members' hour ends at six o'clock. I support wholeheartedly the motion put forward by the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau). It is obvious that the hon. member has worded his motion with a great deal of care. The motion reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Canada should consider the advisability of taking the initiative in securing the collaboration of the provinces in the convening of a national conference on uniform standards—

That is, uniformity of curricula.
—in primary and secondary education.

● (5:50 p.m.)

So he is talking about uniformity across the country in education, whether in the province of Quebec, Alberta or Ontario. Why has the hon. member worded it in that way? The reason goes back to the British North America Act and to the question of constitutional jurisprudence. In order to bring together Upper and Lower Canada, the province of Quebec—and properly so—asked that in the terms of confederation the question of education be left to the provinces. I suppose this is also the reason we had the B and B Commission.

I do not think our constitution is going to be changed in this regard, and perhaps this is why the party to which the hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr.

[Mr. Rose.]