

Federal-Provincial Arrangements Act

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion No. 2 (Mr. Lambert, Edmonton West) withdrawn.

Hon. C. M. Drury (for the Minister of Finance) moved that 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, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Drury (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, I think there is no doubt that dominion-provincial conferences which deals with various matters are becoming more and more a concern on the governmental scene and that the Parliament of Canada and the provincial legislatures have somewhat less significant roles to play.

If we were philosophers we would simply see this as constitutional change in our time because the constitution is, after all, more than 100 years old. As politicians, though, I think we would like to see more of the action in our own arena. We long to have more clout with regard to some of the great arguments of the day, instead of seeing the marvellous postures that various federal people or various provincial premiers and their ministers adopt in negotiations in public and then, when faced with something like the current piece of legislation, no matter what they said about each other or to each other find out about the buddy-buddy system that has been reached in federal-provincial horse-trading which goes on behind the scenes. One becomes a little wary and perhaps more eager, if more frustrated, to discuss some of the subjects that form the basis of federal-provincial agreements.

We in this party make no apology for the accent we put on federal moneys available for higher education at the second reading debate, in the study by the finance committee, and on the motion that has been presented earlier for discussion at the report stage. Some of us have a feeling that the federal authority and the provincial authorities are treating the costs of higher education as one would treat the juggling of eggs—one would wish to put them aside, one would wish to have some control over their rather fragile nature. The fact is that this is a nettle that has to be grasped by both provincial and federal governments and it is a nettle that concerns us very much in this Parliament.

One of the thoughtful presentations, and indeed the only presentation that came from outside sources on this particular bill came to us because the hon. member for Fundy Royal (Mr. Fairweather) thought that we should hear from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, so they appeared before us. I should like to place some of their comments on record in addition to what was placed on the record earlier. In a submission regarding federally-supported universities and colleges of Canada that was made to the government of Canada by the Council of Ministers of Education and is appendix B to issue No. 2 of the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel).]

Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, at page 37 the AUCC brief reads:

We are concerned that there be adequate support for higher education in the face of the projected increases in enrolments, the growing need for research support and facilities to foster the cultural, economic and social requirements of the country as a whole and its regions, the need to reduce the regional disparities across the country and the need to make provision for the mobility of the Canadian population. Moreover, the question of the number of foreign students the universities of Canada should accept is related to Canadian external policy.

We sense a growing demand for continuing university education on a full time and part time basis for retraining, upgrading and for general educational advancement. It is our conviction that universities must prepare for a much deeper involvement in continuing higher education than they have in the past.

That covers a fair amount of waterfront. It deals with the preoccupation of being good citizens in the world at large and being of some help to developing countries as well as concern about our own country. The brief goes on to meet one of the great issues of our time which has not yet been successfully dealt with in this parliament:

There appears to be a growing demand, reflected in our projections, on the part of women for further education to prepare them more adequately for increasing participation in the economic and community activities of society, more informed participation in the activities of the home, and for personal satisfaction. Nevertheless, there are constraints which discourage women, regardless of their ability, from entering university. These constraints include cultural and social attitudes respecting the obligations of women, fewer job opportunities, lower rates of pay and the like.

Mr. Speaker, before redistribution in 1968 I had the honour of representing five or six universities. Under the new boundary arrangements, Halifax-East Hants has only one university, Mount St. Vincent, which is a university largely for women so I am striking a blow for them this evening. What will be the demands on the Parliament of Canada and the legislatures of the various provinces over the next decade from the standpoint of financing the costs of higher education? I admit that this subject makes any minister of finance nervous, whether federal or provincial, because the costs have gone up a great deal. I really cannot see that any restraint or constraint can be placed upon them. This is something that has to be faced, and that money has to be provided. At page 39 of the report the association makes the following projection: in 1958-59 full-time enrolment at universities was 95,000; in 1968-69 it had increased threefold to 293,600; in 1975-76 it is projected to reach 560,000, and in 1980-81, 750,000 almost an eightfold increase as compared with the enrolment of 1958-59. These projections indicate a problem that must be met: it cannot be wished away.

• (2120)

Finally, may I quote further from this thoughtful brief which is many pages long. I have only touched on its highlights this evening. At page 44 we find these words:

In conclusion we wish to emphasize that the probable enrolment is already in sight and has been measured. If adequate financial support is not forthcoming the universities, having made what economies are appropriate and possible, have two options: turn away students who wish to attend or allow quality to deteriorate. We believe the former to be unacceptable to the public and the latter disastrous for the public good.

There, Mr. Speaker, are a few views on the matter, although they do not cover the entire period covered by