

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements

extra money has come to my province in the form of equalization grants and under the formula for federal assistance to post-secondary education. But this is a matter that is really far more fundamental than being simply transfer payments of cash. What I am suggesting is that there is a serious vacuum in this field that cannot be overcome merely by adding a two-year extension to a federal statute. This bill postpones decisions that have to be made. That is why we shall be anxious to hear from officials in the Secretary of State's department, if there are any left responsible for this field, when the bill comes to the committee.

I am alarmed at the growing evidence of an inward-looking policy, if I may put it that way, in the field of post-secondary education. I would not presume, in a debate like this, to comment on the Wright study that is now going on in the province of Ontario, but I have an uneasy feeling—I say this with great respect for my colleagues who represent areas in the province of Ontario—that the Wright commission has had the attitude that here we are in the Garden of Eden—Ontario. We are born here, educated here and we die here, and may the rest of Canada take the hindmost.

• (2110)

I do not say that this is the case in the equalization formula. How could I, since Ontario has been accepted as one of the key provinces in the Canadian federal system? But I am alarmed at some of the things that seem to be said now, at least in the interim stage of the Wright commission investigation of post-secondary education in Ontario. After all, not all Canada can be born, educated and die in Ontario. There is a national aspect, both a constitutional one and also one lying within the whole focus of the government of Canada in university education.

As I say, we have been given two years of grace for a system which is obviously unloved because of the 15 per cent placed on the escalation of funds, unloved by the government of Canada because it is open-ended and unloved by the provinces because of the uncertainties that arise due to the very short duration of the scope of this act.

Dr. Corry has been underlining the national aspect of university education for many years. It is very interesting to go back to the days of 1966 when this whole matter was being discussed and when finally the ad hoc solution was arrived at within days or even hours of the 1967 agreement, if I understand it rightly. Dr. Corry says:

There obviously must be some national goals of education in Canada; even though at one time or another, nearly all of them may be met by initiatives taken within the provinces. . . . There are national goals, and the laying of one-half of the operating costs of post-secondary education as a charge on the federal revenues certifies that proposition.

We discussed in many other debates, when we considered the whole matter of constitutional reform, the aspect of section 93 of the BNA Act, but may I remind the House of a key phrase in section 93 which provides:

In and for each province the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education.

I am not for one minute coming to this Parliament 104 or 105 years after confederation and suggesting that the

[Mr. Fairweather.]

government of Canada should be butting into the provincial aspects of education, curricula and everything else at the school level. But when the BNA Act became law there were very few universities of international or even national scope in this country.

I am perfectly sure that the skilled drafters of the constitution did not for one moment contemplate that in the university area there would not be massive federal responsibility and concern. As Dr. Corry said, if we need any other evidence of it, we are considering in this bill a massive amount of transfers of money from the government of Canada. If we need any more evidence of the national concern, we have it in the educational provisions that are made for our Indian and Eskimo peoples and for the dependants of people serving in the armed forces, and so on. So it is not at all true to say that the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction in the educational field. That is not contemplated by section 93. Of course, the provinces do have exclusive jurisdiction in and for the provinces themselves.

I do not think it would help this debate or national unity if we began picking at various universities and some of the pressures that are on them, but surely of all aspects of our country's life the university is not one that can be constrained by any narrowness or any provincial boundaries. Many of the famous universities of this country are famous because their authority transcends not only provincial boundaries but the boundaries of the country itself.

It is interesting to recall also that in the whole field of funding, post-secondary education raises the matter of the government role in the field of education. Dr. Corry made a couple of speeches about this in Saskatchewan in 1969. The speeches are entitled, "Universities and Governments". They were given as part of the Quance lectures at the University of Saskatchewan a couple of years ago. In these lectures Dr. Corry raised for us the very fundamental issue. He said that when governments begin to have a major responsibility for the funding of institutions then, as night follows day, governments get themselves into the position of making decisions regarding curricula, and so on, which should properly be left to the universities themselves.

As I began my comments I complimented the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand) on the brevity of his speech, so I can hardly carry on much longer. But I do want to say in a general way that the two-year breathing space that has been given to us for the consideration of what is in part VI of Bill C-8 will, I hope, be taken up by the universities themselves, because there is a tremendous amount of information that they should be giving the government of Canada. Also there should be close and intimate contact with the Council of Education Ministers.

Lastly, I hope that when the bill goes to the committee next week or so the officials of the Department of the Secretary of State will be there so that we can raise with them some of the very interesting and what I might call core considerations which arise when governments are heavily involved in the funding of national institutions which are our universities.