

*Education*

never be an important factor in determining the educational opportunities offered to any youth.

As long as school costs are distributed as they are at the present time with the municipality bearing the major share, with the province assisting and the federal government remaining on the sidelines, inequalities in educational opportunity will continue to exist. The opportunities available to young people will be determined by the wealth of the municipality or province in which they live rather than by the national wealth. The type of school, the equipment, the qualifications of teachers will all vary widely according to the financial status of the municipality and the province. Educational opportunities open to youth should never be determined on that basis. The educational opportunities which we offer our youth should be on a national basis and not on the basis of what any one province or municipality can provide.

The fourth reason is that educational costs are advancing. The standards of education which young people require in order to fit themselves for the world today are increasing year by year. This burden is becoming too great for some of our municipalities and provinces to carry. That increasing cost of education makes it all the more essential that the one government which raises taxes on the national level should undertake to bear its share of the burden.

We have heard objections raised in this house, but to my mind none of them is valid. It is high time that this government told us in this debate, either through the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) or some other minister, just where the government stands on this question. When the subject was last debated in the house we were then on the eve of a dominion-provincial conference and it was understood that in all probability this question would be brought before that conference. That conference has come and gone and I suggest that it is high time that we should know what happened at the conference as far as this particular subject is concerned. Was the question discussed? Were any suggestions put forth by the federal or provincial governments? Is the government in favour of or opposed to federal support for elementary, secondary and university education?

One argument that I have heard raised is the fear of the provinces that the federal government will begin to meddle with education in the provinces if it supports general education. I fail to see any validity in that argument. Through the war years the government co-operated with the provinces in numerous educational enterprises. There was

never any difficulty in securing the co-operation of the governments at those two levels. There was never any question of the federal government taking away the right of the provinces to lay down educational policy and to administer education within the provinces.

That question could be solved as most of our other dominion-provincial difficulties have been solved provided there is the will on the part of the provincial and dominion governments. In numerous instances where there has been an overlapping of authority we have found that when the will to overcome those difficulties exists on the part of the federal and provincial governments a way was found. I am confident that if this government were to indicate its intent to support education at the elementary and secondary school levels there would be no difficulty working out a formula with the provinces whereby the provinces could be assured that there would be no interference with their jurisdiction.

I noticed an editorial which appeared in the *Toronto Daily Star* of Friday, May 26, 1950, just after we had the debate on this subject in that session. Up to that time this paper had fairly consistently supported the principle of federal aid to education. During the debate some hesitancy and opposition was shown by cabinet ministers toward federal aid to education. The *Toronto Daily Star*, falling in line, as it always does, with expressed government policy, came out with this sound and serious argument against federal aid:

In the absence of specific provisions there would be nothing to prevent any province reducing its own outlay by the amount received from the dominion government.

The best argument that that paper could put forth against federal aid to education was that if the federal government gave aid to education there was nothing to stop a particular province reducing its grant to education by the amount given by the federal government. Surely it would be just as easy to secure an undertaking on the part of a province that it would not reduce its present contribution to education because a federal grant was being made as it was to secure agreements with the provinces that they would not reduce the amount paid to old age pensioners because the federal government was making a contribution.

One thing that has bedevilled education in this country, not only throughout our lifetime but throughout the whole history of our country, is the conflict between the public and separate schools in some of our provinces. The supporters of separate schools fear that if the federal government steps in with federal grants then they are likely to