

Education

are going to equalize educational opportunities across Canada, when there is a lack of revenue in the municipality, the school district, the town or the province it will be necessary for the federal authority to find ways and means of making grants for education to the several provinces of Canada. That would not be interference with provincial autonomy. I should like to see coupled with it, if it can be worked out without interfering with provincial autonomy, an attempt made to raise the standards, particularly in provinces where standards are low and educational opportunities are few.

I am glad to say that in the western provinces there has been considerable improvement in educational facilities over the last twenty years. I know in my own province of Saskatchewan, looking back over the past six years and viewing education from the standpoint of the rural school, what you see today is something quite different and generally more advantageous to the pupils than what you saw a few years ago. I know when I was in the village of Sturgis last autumn or the town of Oxbow, as well as in the larger places of Kindersley and Rosetown, I saw composite schools that have been built to serve the areas. Some had dormitories attached where the boys and girls could board during the week for quite a small fee. There were machines and lathes and domestic science rooms, educational facilities as good as could be found in some of the schools in our cities.

That is a great advance, but it is a costly advance. In spite of greatly increased grants from the provincial authority the municipalities find it difficult to bear the cost of modern education. It is essential to the welfare of this country that we have an educational system which will give us students of a high calibre and of a high order. As someone else remarked, we found this out during the war. In the few years before the war a good many young men who might have left school to take jobs were unable to find jobs and continued at school. The result was that in the early years of the war we had the largest percentage of young men who qualified as pilots, navigators and observers of any country at war.

Before the war there were a large number of our young men in the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom. When I went to Great Britain in 1941 with Your Honour, the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier), the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) and others, we were told over and over again that the young Canadians who had come to the British isles to enlist in the Royal Air Force

prior to the war were climbing in the service because they had the type of education required to carry them along.

With the kind of world in which we live today, whether it is for war or for peace, a first class education is a prime necessity. I want to see the educational facilities of this country of a type that will give every youth the opportunity of receiving the kind of education which his mental capacity will absorb so that he can render the highest and finest service possible, not only to himself as a citizen but to the community as a whole.

Consequently I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution and I hope that the house will be given an opportunity regardless of party affiliations, because this is not a party matter, of expressing to the government what we would like the government to do in this regard.

Mr. Gordon Graydon (Peel): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to participate in this debate, but I have been encouraged and intrigued by some of the speakers who have preceded me and I want to give one or two of my views with respect to the subject. I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) upon what he said because I think he managed to confine his argument within a small area. He mentioned a point which is close to the opinion of many of us who come from districts like his own.

I approach this subject of education somewhat prejudiced because I married a rural schoolteacher. In addition there are a couple of my family who I expect will go into the same profession. There are a number of matters with respect to federal aid to education that demand the attention of this parliament.

Federal aid to education must be predicated on the fundamental basis that education is essentially and primarily a matter of provincial jurisdiction, and there it must stay. That idea has been so well settled through the years that perhaps no reminder of that position is necessary at this stage of our national life.

I have always felt that education should not be predicated upon either geography or finance. In a country like Canada no brilliant and industrious child should be denied the opportunity to obtain such education as he may be able to absorb and to make use of in the interests, not only of himself but of the greater Canada as a whole. One of the things we have to keep in mind so far as education is concerned is that the obtaining of an education is not a gift to a person. It is a challenge given to a person to do something for