

Private Bills

like her to explain clearly how those grants would be distributed, what would be their amounts and, also, whether some areas are implied or whether provincial jurisdiction is being encroached upon.

[Text]

Miss Jewett: Perhaps I might make two brief comments. First of all, the function of the association is only in part to act as an agent for the federal government in the distributing of grants. It has a great many other functions of great importance that we will come to, no doubt, under clause 2. It acts as agent of the federal government for the distribution of per capita grants, just as the Canadian universities foundation has acted for many years at the request of the federal government.

As I said earlier, I am sure the association has no desire to do anything other than what is within the law. If the federal parliament of Canada has determined that the payment of per capita grants is within its spending power, and this has not been challenged elsewhere in the courts—

Mr. Grégoire: With the consent of the provinces.

Miss Jewett: —if this has been determined by the parliament of Canada and has not been challenged, as indeed it has not, by the courts or elsewhere, then surely it is not up to us here to decide whether or not at this particular point the per capita grant concept is one which should or should not continue. All we need to do here, if I may say so, is to assist an association which has requested incorporation to perform its multitudinous tasks, only one of which is to act as an agent for the federal government in the pursuit of a policy which is legal, which is in fact constitutional and which has not in fact been challenged.

Mr. Grégoire: It has been done with the consent of the provinces, but it is not according to the constitution.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul: Mr. Chairman, it is not very often that I share the views of the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire), but I feel that he has just raised a very interesting point which is closely related to the very principle of provincial autonomy in the field of public education.

After listening to the remarks made by the mover of the bill, I have the impression that the main purpose of this measure is to enable the association to be the federal gov-

ernment's agent, in the field of education, to distribute grants to the provinces' universities. Therefore, it is a hypocritical bill through which the federal government creates an association whose primary purpose will be to interfere in the field of education, which is the provinces' exclusive responsibility.

I see nothing wrong in the various classical colleges and universities of the province being incorporated. But when the sponsor of the bill tells us that the main purpose of that association will be to act as trustee, spokesman, agent, treasurer or distributor of federal grants in the field of education, then I respectfully submit that the Canadian constitution is being violated.

For my part, I shall not support this measure until we know what the aims of the association are. Besides, we should be told whether this is a free association of universities and colleges or if the universities and colleges have been asked by the federal government to form a corporation so the government can intrude in an area where it does not belong.

In my opinion, this would be the first step toward the creation of a federal department of education, because unfortunately that is what too many in this house want.

Personally, Mr. Chairman, I will stand against the passing of this bill because it infringes upon the provinces' exclusive jurisdiction in the field of education.

Mr. Plourde: Mr. Chairman, I should like to put a question to the sponsor of the bill. Will the members of that association or corporation draw salaries from the government grants, or will their work be unpaid? In my opinion, it is important to know whether they work as a voluntary body or whether they are paid by the government, in order to know their interest in their work?

[Text]

Miss Jewett: So far as I am aware, Mr. Chairman, and I would have to check this, there is no other fee paid for the small service they perform. In so far as the prior question is concerned, member institutions are not in any way paid by the government. This is purely a voluntary body financed by a levy on its own members.

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether at this stage, the hon. member for Northumberland does not feel it would be in order to make a statement concerning federal grants to the corporation or association