

Office of Education

back to the land. We have heard about a back to the land movement.

I go through all this because I think our generation is symptomatic of the problem the motion of the hon. member for Vaudreuil seeks to correct. We need a national perspective on education. The hon. member's motion refers principally to linguistic rights—and as I said earlier, I am in absolute agreement with him—but I think there is a second and equally important matter, and that is the impact of education upon the labour market. Only now the provinces are starting to talk about upgrading of apprenticeship training schemes and upgrading vocational schools.

In recent years, in Ontario, we seem to have developed a very successful system of community colleges which teach various trades besides straight academic subjects. More and more students are going into these fields, and they should be encouraged to do so. However, if we had a national office of education, we could encourage people to think of blue collar work as very socially productive and fulfilling.

Last week in this House we heard about the INCO lay-offs, but how many of the people who were laid off really wanted to do the job they were doing? How many were not channelled, in the first place, into a career of their choice? The same question can be asked about people in the public service. There is an old adage: those who can, do; those who can't teach. When the baby boom dropped off, there were fewer teachers, and many graduates who were friends of mine started to come into the public service. I am sure many public servants are unhappy with their jobs because they never wanted to go into the public service in the first place. They never wanted to push paper or make administrative decisions. Perhaps they would be happier welding or doing certain work in a factory.

There is no national system of standards. There is no national education policy which can direct the energies and aspirations of Canadians. I am not suggesting, as the hon. member for Egmont suggested, that the federal government take over education. Goodness knows, we are probably into more areas than we should be already. We should probably be phasing ourselves out of some areas. Education systems should still be run by the provincial governments, but the federal government could establish broad national policies for both the labour market and for second language education.

I have gone on at length and I apologize to hon. members for my rather hodge-podge speech. I had notice of this debate only a little while ago. However, this motion underlines the whole constitutional debate in this country. I see that the hon. member for Egmont agrees with me. I think it was a week ago Friday, when I was speaking during the throne speech debate, that I said within five years we in this chamber would have to come to terms with restructuring, not just the House of Commons or the Senate but our entire system. We need to rearrange our entire constitution.

I welcome this opportunity to put forward some of my views on what I consider to be a fundamental question. The hon. member for Vaudreuil evoked cries of national unity, and it is quite obvious from the way members of the opposition react

[Mr. Collenette.]

every time we talk about national unity that they are scared. They try to castigate our very honourable motives in talking about national unity. But the hon. member for Vaudreuil was dead on; he was absolutely right, that national unity is not just second language education. It is also the strength of the economy and the satisfaction and fulfilment each individual within the Canadian society can get, at whatever vocation he chooses.

In conclusion, I fully support the substance of the motion of the hon. member for Vaudreuil. I would like it to be expanded somewhat in order to put special emphasis on a national educational policy which would be adapted to the labour needs of the country. I urge the hon. member for Egmont and his colleagues opposite to reconsider this very sensible motion.

[Translation]

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to speak but when I heard what the hon. member for York East (Mr. Collenette) said earlier today, I felt I had to add a few comments on his speech. He said that the Fathers of Confederation made a mistake when they made the provinces responsible for education. I think he never did refer to 1887 when the Fathers of Confederation lived in Upper and in Lower Canada. I want to mention that during that time the English element represented the large majority and that Upper Canada led the struggle to ensure the right to education in order to avoid being integrated by French Canadians.

This is a little remark I want to make casually, and I think that the Fathers of Confederation have been very wise since these developments; as Canada grew larger we note that the English element was becoming stronger than the French element. Later the French element had a little advantage. The fact that education was exclusively under provincial jurisdiction was a kind of safety valve for the French element. And that is why sections 92 and 93 of the BNA Act have been well thought out for the two great peoples who live in Canada.

The hon. member was wondering whether the provinces had properly discharged their duties in the field of education. If one carefully studies Canadian history, one will find that one of the provinces which showed proper respect for minorities is still Quebec which has properly treated its minorities for the past 110 years and which will continue to do so. If the second language which is made official today by government action has not been respected, it was in the other provinces. If it has not and still is not treated as it should be, it was in the other provinces. So I invite the hon. member for York East to take a look at what is going on in his own riding and to refrain from trying to push the federal government in those sectors which were essentially entrusted to the provinces.

I believe all provinces are anxious to keep the areas they have decided to keep because back in 1887 the provinces themselves decided to keep such and such an area and to leave certain priorities to the federal government. They all decided to leave these sectors to the federal government so that it may rule on behalf of and with the consent of all provinces. I suggest to the hon. member that he reread the beginning of Canadian history, which will enable him to give a sounder