

Education

will be asking for trouble. We should not try to direct what eventually goes into the classroom. No one wants to see centralization of power in terms of curriculum and what happens in a classroom.

In terms of trying to help overcome regional disparity and giving Canadians an equal opportunity to develop their human capability and capacity, no official in the Quebec government would be so narrow-minded as to not recognize the need for federal presence. I challenge any minister of education in Quebec to say to his people that he would not recognize the need for federal financial involvement, and perhaps the co-operation of other provinces to arrive at some common goals and objectives across the country. Any Quebec minister who would say that would be placing the narrow political interest of his province ahead of his responsibility to the people.

I am convinced the reason we have economic disparity in Prince Edward Island, in Newfoundland, in parts of northern Canada and in Quebec is that there have never been the available educational opportunities to develop the capabilities of these people. People in these regions do not have the skill to develop their resources. I can speak with some knowledge about the province of Newfoundland. Regardless of the programs and finances available for regional development, we cannot take advantage of them because we do not have the necessary managerial pool. Our people have not had the opportunity to develop their skills in all the fields of industrial and economic development.

Other than Montreal, Quebec City and a few other sophisticated parts of the province of Quebec there is basically the same problem in that province. These people have not had the opportunity. I do not say their educational system has not been up to par, but I know for a fact that up to the past ten years or so Quebec's educational system was one of the retarding factors in the economic development of the province.

It would be wise for the leaders of our provincial governments, including Quebec, to accept a resolution of this nature and get the federal government to recognize that education is the right of all Canadians. It is their right to have a decent livelihood and to develop their potential to the greatest capacity. This would help some of our poorer provinces which suffer so much from underdevelopment. They would be able to move ahead much more quickly. I do not say this could happen tomorrow. However, if this problem is not recognized today these provinces will be in the same boat half a century from now.

Some months ago the Newfoundland budget was brought down. I cannot quote the exact figures but I can say a greater percentage of the total budget was allocated to education than in any other province of Canada. At the same time, our expenditure is the most inadequate in terms of the need that exists in any province. I believe the figure was \$168 million out of a budget of roughly \$500 million. Over 30 per cent of the total budget will go into the field of education.

In dozens of communities in my province there are one-room schools with six or eight grades, and some times ten or eleven. They do not have the proper facilities. Some of them do not even have decent toilet facilities and other things that were expected in most parts of Canada half a

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

century ago. These are the extremes. We do have some beautiful, modern schools. We have made progress, but our rate of progress is so slow that by the time we reach one level of achievement the rest of Canada has moved rapidly ahead and the gap increases instead of lessening.

I present this motion very seriously. I think I do so with the blessing of every educator in this country. I recently had a meeting with many people involved in graduate studies in a particular university. I was quizzed about the prospect of federal involvement in the field of education. I did not have a lot of advice or encouragement to give them. I advised them to draft a position paper and ask for a meeting with the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and others who are involved, in order to present the case that the federal government must recognize that a good education should be a right to be enjoyed by everyone. Once people are educated to their greatest potential the chance of economic development is much greater. There should be common goals, with co-operation from the federal and the provincial people. This would improve national unity and Canadian mobility in a way that would meet modern-day expectations.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa East): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the mover of this motion. The intent of his motion is most honourable. I wish I had the facility to speak in English as fast as the hon. member. I have a bad habit of speaking French. I hope the few remarks I will make on the subject will be understood by the hon. member.

I appreciate the hon. member's point about the mobility factor and the fact that in this wide-ranging country of ours the problems of education peculiar to regional disparities are very acute. Like the hon. member, I have had 11 years' experience on a school board. I agree that educational opportunities are not equal, and possibly a meeting of the nature he suggested would be proper.

I remind the hon. member that in 1962 there was a Canadian conference on education held in Montreal. It is with some joy that I note the co-chairman of that conference was an uncle of mine, Mr. Robert Gauthier. I wish to mention some of the things that bother me, as a Franco-Ontarian, about the quality of education. Ontario is a very large province. We have regional disparities as between southern Ontario and northern Ontario. We also suffer from the problem of educational inequality.

[Translation]

The aims of education are as various as those of society itself because, after all, they are determined by the values of the society. The Canadian mosaic enables any Canadian citizen to be educated in English throughout Canada. But it is not possible for the minority French-speaking citizens in Alberta to get their education in their mother tongue from primary school to university, and this is unfair. The situation is about the same in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

I believe that a Canadian conference on the problem of equal opportunities would serve a useful purpose in order to find, in cooperation with the provinces, a means, a procedure to enable all Canadians, wherever they live, in Newfoundland or in British Columbia, to further their