

Education

British about their system. In exactly the same way many of our medical men, for example, go to universities in Europe because these universities have a special importance in particular fields. I believe these universities have derived their importance from the national system of education in which they exist.

Therefore I say again that I hope the time will come when, even though education is the responsibility of the provinces, there will be something distinctly Canadian about our own education.

I support the idea of this committee and I believe there is a job for it to do. In the western world today I think education faces a greater challenge than it has ever faced. I do not think education has to take on a too practical line; I do not think it must be too practical in its aspect. I think it has a broader meaning than that. A knowledge and a sense of education at this time is very fundamental to our own survival. I am not going to delve into this problem too deeply, Mr. Speaker, but it is an interesting one to discuss and to realize the part that education can play in the survival of the western world.

While education is the responsibility of the provincial governments, I think in this country we have reached the time when it should become the responsibility of all levels of government and all people. We often hear the phrase, "Education is everybody's business". One could put up a pretty good argument in favour of that proposition; there is also an equally good argument against it. I believe that education is the business of everybody who has some particular interest in education. However, there are two sides to the question of education. There is the practice of education, and there is the plant and equipment required for the practice of education. If the federal government does not want to interfere in the practice of education and the different provinces are to have their own systems, then certainly the federal government could assist in providing the plant, materials and equipment required for the practice of education. Only by doing this can we bring education across this country in the various provinces up to some acceptable level.

I think democracy is an experiment; I think it is an experiment in faith; I think it is an experiment in the faith that free people are able to protect themselves and preserve their own way of life. I do not think we have proved this yet. But I think that if we can build within our own minds a respect for knowledge, a sense of learning and the feeling that an individual can be a part of the whole and can at the same

time be different, then we have taken a considerable step forward toward preserving our own democracy.

Mr. Brunsden: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Batten: Yes.

Mr. Brunsden: Does the hon. member suggest by his remarks that this government has not played a part in building plants and equipment?

Mr. Batten: Mr. Speaker, I made no such suggestion. I suspect that my hon. friend is referring to moneys that were allocated a few days ago in this house, about which I do not suppose I am able to say very much. But if the hon. gentleman were to go back over the debates in this house over the years he would find there have been very, very few occasions when the question of vocational and technical training has come up in this chamber and it did not receive my fullest support.

I am not much interested in which government does what, but I am interested in the support of education. I am not much concerned about who gets the credit, but I am concerned about the results. Therefore I say to my hon. friend that if he has surmised from my remarks that I have not given the present government full credit for what they have done, I can assure him that I did not intend to do so. I can also assure him that I will continue to support vocational and technical education and any other form of education that we feel is required to help the young people of this country become good Canadians.

Mr. Brunsden: Thank you very much.

Mr. Batten: I think one big problem we have across this country is the question of equality of opportunity. In the different provinces we have different systems of education. I think it is fair to say that the system in some provinces may offer better opportunities to their young people than the system in others.

This would not be a very easy problem to solve. I think that if this committee were set up, as the proposer of this resolution has suggested, perhaps one of the things it could study would be what can be done to equalize opportunity across this country and how it can be done, while at the same time preserving those things in each provincial system of education which the people in that province think important.

For example, there are certain things in the educational system of Newfoundland which I would like to see preserved. There are some things in the system of education in Ontario and all the other provinces which the people of those provinces would like to preserve. At the same time there is a national thread through education which I think should

[Mr. Batten.]