

National Centennial Act

prevail since the Liberal party came into power in the province of Quebec, in that every means is used to evade the law in order to protect the supporters of the regime, in spite of the fact that the present government blamed the previous administration in the province of Quebec for having dispensed patronage.

In my opinion, the danger entailed by those amendments intended to emphasize the advantages of confederation, is that they open a door to patronage. It seems to me that the minister could have been much more cautious and stood clear of crypto-separatism, which he has so often exposed by removing such an amendment from this legislation.

I should not want either to leave unchallenged the statements made by the minister in the last few weeks about the respect of confederation, but I wonder why he has made this change in the act in order to increase the membership of the commission from 8 to 12.

Obviously, it is not to give a job to a few unemployed.

Mr. Lamontagne: It is to provide representation for all provinces.

Mr. Valade: This is the reason given, to provide representation for all provinces, but the same excuse was given when at the beginning of the session, the Atlantic Development Board Act was amended. The same excuse was given when the present government proposed to amend the Canadian World Fair Act. The other day, the Prime Minister gave the assurance that he would consider amending the Canadian World Fair Act to increase the number of directors. Probably once again this is to open the door to patronage.

In all the measures introduced by the government, the basic principles are altered by amendments opening the door to patronage. This bill should be free of all political influence and all the measures introduced by this government should be safe from such political influence.

Mr. Lamontagne: Would the hon. member allow me a question? Does the hon. member agree that we should try to appoint representatives from all provinces within the centennial commission?

Mr. Valade: I agree completely with the minister about representation of the provinces within that commission, but, in my opinion, there are several ways to achieve this. And I think the minister must realize there are other ways to solve the problem.

I appreciate that the number could have been increased to 16, 24 or 48. I do not know the maximum number the minister could set

[Mr. Valade.]

but, by increasing by one third or one half the existing number, he saw to it that he would get the majority when decisions are reached with regard to grants amounting to less than \$25,000. The act states clearly that the commission has the right to undertake a distribution program for gifts, grants of less than \$25,000.

So, the amendment concerning the appointment of other members to the commission opens the way to such an implication. I am not raising an accusation.

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, we ask to be authorized to increase the number of the directors of the commission from 8 to 12, and I said to the Leader of the Opposition the other day that our intention was not to replace the eight directors already appointed by the former government, so that we would not have the majority when decisions are taken.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister for this statement because the appointments made by us were not political appointments. That is where lies the difference between the present government's attitude and that of the former government.

In the list submitted to the house by the minister on November 20 as recorded on page 4978 of *Hansard*, I see the name of Mr. Jean Brillant, one of the Liberal party's financial backers.

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, may I remind the hon. member that that concerns the national conference that has already been set up, and which is not at all the same thing as the centennial commission. Consequently, I would ask the hon. member to read the act and restrict himself to the question under study.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must remind the hon. member for St. Mary that in this debate I called to order some members who seemed to confuse the two agencies.

Mr. Choquette: The Duplessis manner.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Lotbiniere has just said words that may be dangerous for him, since nationalistic and crypto-separatist statements were not made by Mr. Duplessis, but rather by his friends Messrs. Levesque and Lesage.

Moreover, I think that many statements on the part of some of his friends in the province of Quebec have contributed more to disunion in Canada than any statement made by the former premier of that province.

I also think that the hon. member for Lotbiniere should think again, for he has made another statement where he gave a detailed account of the Liberal party's great