

Government Orders

either, especially since the same hon. member had just finished saying that these people had "pleaded" with the committee to have the opportunity to present their very legitimate requests. What a respectful attitude for the government members to have!

The artists are, in fact, far from satisfied with the minister's amendment. That is what they told us. Several associations from both Quebec and English Canada, who were able to appear before the Committee on Canadian Heritage because of pressure by members of the Bloc Québécois, told us they were disappointed with and concerned about the attitude of the government.

Twenty-five Quebec and Canadian associations, representing more than 30,000 writers, creative artists and performers, sent an open letter to the Minister of Heritage asking to complete the review of the Copyright Act, in light of the following nine recommendations: the confirmation of the creative artist as the first holder of the rights to his or her work; the recognition of neighbouring rights; the adjudication of consequential rights to visual artists; the protection of works for the rest of the life of the author or the copyright holder; the use of technologically neutral definitions; compensation through private copy; the establishment of a rental right; the elimination of all exceptions to the protection of works; the adoption of adequate sanctions to protect the rights of creative artists.

• (1325)

These demands are far from being unreasonable since numerous countries have included them in their legislation. Germany, Japan and France have all adhered to the 1961 Rome Convention, but Canada has not. These G-7 countries have recognized the need for royalties on private copy, but Canada has not. France and Germany have legislated on neighbouring rights, but Canada has not; it does not seem to find it appropriate to do so.

In conclusion, I would say that it is through copyright and neighbouring rights that creative artists and copyright holders can ensure the continuity of their creative work by receiving just compensation for the use of their work. The present situation has to change. Not only is this situation unacceptable in the context of a society that claims to respect the people who are the source of its cultural heritage, but its national and international notoriety makes it embarrassing for Quebec and Canada.

This government will soon prove to us that it sees culture only as a symbol that can generate money.

The least we can say is that, with such a policy and such a government, the future is certainly not bright for the pillars of Canada's and Quebec's cultures. Let us be realistic and not mince words: the government is showing once again that it is totally incapable of taking a stand in favour of artists and understanding the interests of creative artists.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the speech made by the hon. member for Québec.

I would like to know her definition of a Quebecer. I often hear the Quebec nation defined as including the English, the Irish and the Scots. Does it include the Jews and other groups or are we talking about old French Canadian families exclusively? I would appreciate her comments on this definition. How does she see the Quebec nation?

Mrs. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, I am a little surprised the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine should ask this question. As a Quebecer himself, he ought to know.

A Quebecer is, first of all, someone who lives in Quebec and is defined as such by his language and culture. I am not going to make a long speech about what it means to be a Quebecer. If the hon. member has trouble explaining what it means to him to be a Quebecer, then he is the one who has a problem.

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, I have no trouble defining what I am and explaining who I am.

However, in this debate on Quebec nationalism, which has been going on for some time, there are people who claim that Quebec includes all minorities. But all I keep hearing from the opposition is that there are Quebecers whose ancestors settled here long ago and that the partnership and participation of other cultures has become irrelevant.

I am not asking the hon. member to tell me where I fit in but to tell me whether the English, the Irish and all other minorities are part of Quebec as we know it today. That is all I want to know.

Mrs. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, a Quebecer is someone who believes in Quebec values. He believes he can identify himself as a Quebecer. A Quebecer is someone who travels. I heard Mr. Dupuy say that when he is in Canada, he says he is from Quebec, and when he is in another country, he says he is from Canada.

I have no trouble identifying myself. When I travel throughout the world, and I have had several opportunities to do so, when I am outside my country, outside Quebec, I say I am a Quebecer. When I say I am a Quebecer, people realize I am a francophone, because outside Canada, people know there is a francophone majority living in Canada. This is a way of identifying myself as a Quebecer.

A Quebecer is also someone who believes in his or her values. I think Quebec must have all the tools it needs to be able to decide its future.

• (1330)

Centralizing all decision-making authority and standardizing all programs the way the government is doing today is not going to help Quebec find its identity.