

National Arts Centre

because of his intelligence or because of the contribution which he could make to that board—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member allow me a question to prevent him from misunderstanding the meaning of our remarks. He will notice that the amendment speaks not of French Canadians or English Canadians but says that the linguistic duality must be taken into consideration. An English Canadian can speak both languages and then the linguistic duality is taken into account. A French Canadian can speak both languages and, there again, the linguistic duality is taken into account. I would like the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) to take that into consideration.

[*English*]

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Lapointe has made his speech once and he is just summarizing precisely what he said 20 minutes ago.

The point I am trying to make, whether the hon. member for Lapointe likes it or not, is this. Having lived perhaps longer in the province of Quebec than he has, since I may be a little older at 44 years of age, I do not consider myself any less a Quebecker by reason of the fact that I was born of Irish parents than the hon. member who by accident was born of French-speaking Canadian parents. Furthermore, there are times when I listen to the hon. member for Lapointe and consider that I have more respect for and understanding and appreciation of the contribution French speaking Canadians have made to Canada than he has.

I think that any crown corporation in this country, whether it be a new crown corporation or an existing one, that numbers French speaking Canadians on its board of directors does so not because of ill-founded legislation which makes this imperative but because that crown corporation realizes that French speaking Canadians as well as English speaking Canadians have something worth while to contribute to the corporation. If we are ever to have a united country, Mr. Chairman, it is time that we stopped trying to legislate this type of thing into our statute books. You do not overcome prejudice by the statute books; you overcome it by practice and understanding.

The point which the hon. member for Lapointe seems to forget is that French speaking Canadians, under the present terms

[Mr. Mackasey.]

of the British North America Act, have risen to positions of great prominence in this country not because there has been an amendment to a bill or because of a particular term in the constitution or the constitution of a corporation making it imperative that they be appointed. The hon. member mentions corporations which do not include French speaking representation. What about the President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation? What about Mr. Roberge, President of the National Film Board? What about the Governor General of this country whom the Leader of the Opposition saw fit to appoint as the first French speaking Governor General of Canada? What about former Prime Minister St. Laurent? What about the contribution of General Allard who has just become the top soldier in the country? Were these appointments made through legislation? What about French Canadian representation in the Supreme Court of Canada, not forgetting the Chief Justice himself?

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that these people did not go home, having been appointed to these positions, and hide behind some legislation. These people were appointed because of their ability and the fact that they were Canadians foremost and Quebeckers second. I suggest it is time that the hon. member for Lapointe became a Quebecker second and a Canadian first.

I stood up in this house not yesterday but three years ago and asked the house when we would eliminate the English separatists in Canada. I predicted that French speaking separatists would disappear and I am glad to repeat this prediction today. But there are times when I wonder whether the hon. member in the corner, in fighting his battle for an associate state, realizes that he is abusing the very mandate which the people of the constituency of Lapointe gave him to come here and represent them in a united Canada. That is his mandate. It is not to use every little piece of legislation which comes forward to drive home what all French Canadians are entitled to and are not entitled to.

I submit, Mr. Chairman, that French Canadians are entitled to the same things as I am. They are entitled to make their mark in life in the same way as I am, namely, by hard work and recognition of ability. If we are to have the unity that all of us want, regardless of where we sit in the House of Commons, it is time we stopped putting a prefix to the word Canadian. We are all