

Canadian National Railways

very matter, I was asking the Minister of Transport a question the other day concerning—

The Chairman: Order. Perhaps the hon. member for Lapointe could indicate to the Chair how his comments tie in with the bill now before the committee, which concerns exclusively the appointment of auditors for the C.N.R.

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Chairman, you know very well what may involve—

An hon. Member: Order.

Mr. Gregoire:—the appointment of auditors for the C.N.R. It is not because some individual on the other side of the house shouts "order" that one is out of order.

You know very well that we are discussing the appointment of a person who will act as an auditor—

The Chairman: Order. I should like to ask the hon. member for Lapointe not to go beyond the bill now before the committee.

Mr. Gregoire: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I am speaking to the bill now before us. As I said, parliament is being asked to appoint an auditor for the C.N.R. This is just one of the functions in the Canadian National.

Each time somebody is appointed to the Canadian National, such an appointment is within the general frame of the present debate. I submit that my remarks are completely within the limits of the debate on the bill.

When, as I said a moment ago, I note that out of the 18 directors of the Canadian National, there is only one French Canadian, and that when there is a new appointment to the Canadian National, it is not a French Canadian who is appointed, are we not entitled to protest? Every new opportunity which arises to appoint a French Canadian is disregarded.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say this. The appointments are made without parliament knowing about it, without the hon. members knowing about it. On the other hand, when this bill, or any other bill, is submitted to the house, when our approval is sought we have the right to stand up and say: when the government appoints people, it does not take into consideration—and it did not in the past—the fact that we are living in a bilingual country, that both races, both cultures, English and French, have the right to be recognized, and consequently that French Canadians should be appointed to high positions within the crown companies, and not exclusively our fellow citizens, heirs to the other great cultural heritage of this country.

[Mr. Gregoire.]

Mr. Chairman, I submit that my remarks are in order. I request that they be taken into consideration in the appointment provided for in this bill.

[Text]

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Scott: Surely, Mr. Chairman, you will protect us from these wild, irresponsible, demagogic statements that are being made by the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak on the point of order.

I know we often deal with the French fact. That may not agree with certain members. But I would remind these members, who are perhaps the ones who speak from morning till night when agriculture or western wheat is discussed, that we do not complain. On the contrary, we encourage them to speak about their problems in the House of Commons. Should there be in the house western members who wish to speak about wheat, we shall approve them.

Each member speaks about the problems in which he is interested. As far as we are concerned, we speak about those in which we are interested. I think the hon. member is ill-advised to interrupt as he did a moment ago.

The Chairman: Order, please—

Mr. Teillet: Mr. Chairman, I—

The Chairman: Order. The hon. member for Lapointe cannot make remarks in that respect, since they refer to the appointment of members of the board of directors of the C.N.R. However, I believe that when he complains, for instance, to follow his line of thought, that generally the government does not name French Canadians to certain positions, he comes closer, to a certain extent, to the bill under study.

On the other hand, I would ask him to link his remarks more specifically to the particular appointments we are considering at the present time.

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Chairman, in my opinion, my remarks are connected, by way of consequence, to the appointment of the auditors for the C.N.R. since that appointment forms part of the general picture. It is through that deduction that it relates to the bill under consideration.

In my opinion, it is not demagogic for a member to rise in this house and claim part of what belongs to his own people in a country where one would like understanding to prevail. That is how I connect my remarks,