

National Arts Centre

officially to the house the government policy on the important matters which were the subject of my amendment, there is no doubt that my objectives have now been achieved. I could even say that they have been more than achieved, since my amendment applied only to a single piece of legislation.

In the circumstances, I cannot see any reason for maintaining my amendment and I therefore ask the unanimous consent of the house to withdraw it.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I must ask hon. members of this house if they agree to the hon. member for Lévis withdrawing his amendment.

[*English*]

Is it agreed that the hon. member has leave to withdraw his amendment? The right hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Grégoire: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, the house has seen a most unusual—

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Lapointe on a point of order.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, you ask whether the hon. member has the unanimous consent of the house to withdraw his motion. Well, he does not have it from our group and I would like to explain why we are not ready to allow the hon. member for Lévis (Mr. Guay) to withdraw his motion.

I listened with great interest to the Prime Minister's statement, especially when he said that any government would take into serious consideration the factor—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member for Lapointe but I had recognized the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker). And I understand very well the point he just made to the effect that—

Mr. Grégoire: The amendment is not withdrawn?

The Deputy Chairman: The amendment has not yet been withdrawn because unanimous consent has not been given. It may or may not be given later on.

[*English*]

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman of course has made his position [Mr. Guay.]

very clear and no doubt he will amplify it. It is not for me to argue the case. When this matter came before the house I took strong opposition to it. On June 10, at page 6252 of *Hansard*, I pointed out the dangers in this type of amendment. The Prime Minister has now seen fit to agree with the contention I advanced and which I believe was in the interest of our country as a whole.

It is of interest that the minister of manpower is not in the house, for he followed me on that occasion and spoke eloquently and succinctly. He said:

In its present form, the amendment contains nothing of a racial nature.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, I just want to say that, personally, I would have preferred this amendment not to be presented to the house, but since it is before the house, I do not see how I can be against it and I shall vote for it because, as there are real grievances in this field, it would mean that the house does not heed these grievances but rejects them altogether.

Therefore, I shall vote for the amendment, although personally I wish it had never been presented.

We find a most anomalous situation. When ministers speak on matters connected with legislation they speak for the government. That is the constitutional position. Now we have a position of affairs where a minister purported to speak for the government and said he was going to vote for this amendment. In his absence today the Prime Minister has asked for the withdrawal of the amendment, to which the hon. gentleman who moved it agreed.

● (5:20 p.m.)

This is a most unusual step in constitutional development. I would very much like to see the minister of manpower here to ascertain whether in the intervening two weeks or so since he expressed himself on this matter he has seen the light.

Mr. Pearson: He said he preferred to have it withdrawn.

Mr. Pickersgill: He said it at the time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I missed the interruption.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, the right hon. gentleman read his words and he said he wished it had never been moved, so he is getting exactly what he asked for in having it withdrawn.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The aroused nature of the hon. gentleman indicates that I have touched a tender spot. He never rises and becomes so