

Government Orders

institutions and organizations that are directly concerned and have expertise in the field of heritage languages as well as colleges that teach the languages for example, and community programs that have experienced people to nominate candidates for the boards so that they are experienced people who are not partisan and who are being appointed because of their expertise. It would also ensure that there would be regional representatives. Many witnesses at the committee wanted this as well.

I would hope that this change would be supported, particularly by the government because it would show its intention to make this a solid, democratically-appointed board rather than patronage appointments which is very usual from this government.

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Madam Speaker, this particular section of the act, clause 6, relates to the board of directors which will actually be there to direct the activities of the Heritage Languages Institute. There will be 21 directors that will be selected from across the country.

Let us reflect for a moment on what is in the bill. How will these people be selected? They will be selected after and in such consultation with provincial governments, institutions, organizations and individuals. All those people will be consulted. It is important to read that with clause 6.(2) of the bill which says:

(2) Persons appointed to the Board must have knowledge or experience that will assist the Institute in fulfilling its purpose.

I think the amendment is looking for persons to be representing organizations and language schools. Because of the vast numbers of organizations and schools that we have, we could not have all these organizations represented because we have 21 directors.

• (1300)

What we need is to have an opportunity for the minister, after consultation, to appoint those persons with experience and knowledge. Geographic representation, as the member has suggested, would be taken into consideration, as well, in order to have people with a broad spectrum of skills and expertise to make this

institute the tremendous organization that we believe it will be.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak in favour of the amendment in the name of the hon. member for Vancouver East. We have no other choice but to support it. How can we guarantee fairness and, above all, professionalism and impartiality, in an institute where the members of the Board of directors are to be appointed on the recommendation of the minister?

Does this government intend to do what it did in the Senate and appoint its friends, who will have to respond to the priorities determined by the minister?

Madam Speaker, the institute should be able to make its own appointments, after consultation, of course, with cultural communities and teachers. I say this because they are in a position to select the people they believe are most competent and capable of performing their duties, and do not need the government's official or informal approval. I therefore support this amendment.

[*English*]

We have already seen evidence of great government partiality in the nominations of the members to a recent multicultural commission. Some of the members on this particular cultural commission are in absolutely no way linked or connected to any large national cultural bodies. Some, I believe, are really hacks.

Mr. Karygiannis: Hacks? Shame!

Mrs. Maheu: I would even go so far as to say they represent only themselves, or perhaps the minister. They have never been involved in some instances in any way, shape, or form with any cultural community.

The bottom line on this whole institute makes one wonder if it is not a political candy to Edmonton. That is why we, as Liberals, on this side of the House are supporting the amendment of the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Mr. Karygiannis: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Scarborough Centre made a comment that I could not hear, but let me reassure my colleague that my constitu-