

Electoral Boundaries Commission

that if we give the leader of the Liberal party and the leader of the Conservative party the opportunity to make appointments to this commission we are creating in the minds of the people of Canada an image of partisan politics, and that there is something wrong about it. I think the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre should correct his stand on this. What is required in this country is respect for parliament, and that carries with it respect for the leaders of these two great parties.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: Obviously some people in the left hand corner of the chamber have no respect for the leader of the Liberal party or the leader of the Conservative party, but there are millions of people in the country who have, while their supporters are not very numerous. I suggest that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre should revise his thinking on this, rather than lodge the suspicion that if these two gentlemen are given the privilege and the job of appointing people to these commissions, then something underhanded will be done.

I think he is reflecting on our method of government. Even if you do not like the gentlemen concerned, it is better to accept the fact that the people of the country have given them these responsible positions. You support the institution of parliament by so doing, and you support the party system within our parliamentary democracy.

Mr. Knowles: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Churchill: Yes.

Mr. Knowles: Why are we taking the drawing of our constituency boundaries out of the hands of a parliamentary committee and putting it in the hands of an independent commission, something we all support including the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre? Is that downgrading the processes of parliament and saying there is something wrong with parliament?

Mr. Churchill: No, I do not think it is by any means. Parliament in the past has found it an extraordinarily difficult task to draw the boundary divisions in this country, and there are historical incidents when advantage was taken by one party over the other in the drawing of those boundaries. It is agreeable to parliament in this day, as has been mentioned on many occasions, to have this onerous job performed by a body out-

side parliament because we are mixed daily in controversy here, and there is the striving for party advantage at the polls with which I am not in disagreement at all.

As the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings said, everybody in the country should be interested in politics and should belong to a political party. I do not know why we have so many thousands of people who take no interest in politics. It is here in the House of Commons that their future is determined. This is where the decisions are made with regard to war and peace. This is where the decisions are made with regard to economic progress and economic decline; and how people can say "Oh, I am not interested in politics" escapes me completely.

Everybody in the country should belong to a political party and try to get their views advanced through that political party. To stand on the sidelines, to let others carry on and then complain is not good citizenship. Therefore we must remove this phrase of partisan politics from our dialogue if it carries the connotation that there is something terribly wrong about it. There is nothing wrong with it at all if it is not carried to the extreme. It is a conflict of parties in this state having different philosophies of life, and if the people are content to have one party in power at one time and another at a later time, that has been proven to be a better method of governing a democracy than killing off your leaders at different intervals and putting in somebody else.

Having said that, I wish to say that the amendment is absolutely unnecessary. Once again I draw attention to the experience in this field which Great Britain has had for over 20 years. It established four boundary commissions, headed by the Speaker of the House of Commons, supported by the registrar general for England and the director of ordinance survey. That gives three members and then there are two appointees, one by the secretary of state and one by the minister of health. They are both political appointees. Those boundary commissions were set up by the Labour government in 1944—

Mr. Pickersgill: It was the coalition government.

Mr. Churchill: The coalition government, in 1944, and the act was amended in 1947 and consolidated in 1949. The Labour government had control for a certain period and the Conservative party in England has had control for a certain period. They have not changed the basic factors with regard to

[Mr. Churchill.]