

*Employment in Public Service*

of or against a political party". Political parties are not organizations that come into being just at election times. They have a reasonably permanent existence. As a matter of fact some of them have been around too long. So I think the minister cannot say that this relates only to the period immediately surrounding a general election.

**Mr. Benson:** I did not say "general".

**Mr. Knowles:** If he means by-elections, we have them all the time.

**Mr. Benson:** It applies to the time surrounding an election period.

**Mr. Knowles:** Since hardly a year goes by without a by-election in the federal field, it can affect activity for or against a political party. In fact I would ask the minister to explain this. There is nothing that I can see which would qualify as to time the wording in lines 46 and 47 on page 13 which read: "or engage in work for, on behalf of or against a political party".

**Mr. Benson:** He can do this at any time.

**Mr. Knowles:** I agree, and I am not trying to change the ban against working for, on behalf of or against a political party. However I suggest that this very language has ruined the minister's argument about time. He cannot say that subclauses 1 and 2 refer only to a few weeks or months surrounding an election. It seems to me that, as the hon. member for Carleton said, if the minister is satisfied that simply being a member of a party is not in contravention of the ban, then why not say so. Is it not necessary now to say so in view of the fact that in subclause 2 we specify what can be done despite the ban? I suggest that having told civil servants that they can attend meetings and make contributions without contravening the ban, we are using language which may make civil servants wonder whether they have the freedom which the minister suggested they do have.

**Mr. McCleave:** Mr. Chairman, I am glad to see the words "attending a political meeting", because if they were not here I suppose some argument could be made that the chairman of the Civil Service Commission and other public servants should not be allowed to enter the House of Commons to listen to some of our deliberations. However, may I point out right away that I rise to speak on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. The minister has suggested

that, because as members of the committee we were entrusted with a particular task, once we have completed that task whatever we brought forth would be immutable and unchangeable. Perhaps he offers as a compliment the suggestion that our actions in committee were as fossilized as the laws of the Medes and the Persians, which changeth not.

However, may I point out to him that clause 32 was an amendment brought in by his parliamentary secretary, who stood off manfully any attempts to make changes. Further I will suggest to the minister that it would be only human nature if the aforesaid parliamentary secretary, a very estimable fellow, had checked with higher authority before bringing it in.

I know the parliamentary secretary is an excellent draftsman, but I would go even further and suggest that there were certain officials who undoubtedly had a hand in the wording of this particular clause. Call me a suspicious fellow if you will, Mr. Chairman, but my suspicions go even so far as to lead me to believe that the Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board gave his blessing somewhere along the way to the clause which was brought before us by his parliamentary secretary. So I hope again that, with this little refresher of memory, the minister will accede to the very sensible suggestion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

In reading the various subclauses of clause 32 it does not seem to me out of place or illogical to place such a proviso in there. After all there are other permissible actions such as the contribution of money, and in the practice of Nova Scotian politicians one usually follows up one's money with political action. If civil servants are allowed to make contributions I do not see why they cannot be considered as members of a political party. Indeed I think the backroom boys who collect the moneys for the various political parties would think that almost the only *sine qua non* of being a member of a political party was to come marching in with monetary support. I appeal to the minister therefore that he consider the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

If I may be allowed to say something which may be considered out of order, because I may not be able to take part in the deliberations tonight—

**Mr. Walker:** Before the hon. member starts on another subject I wonder if he would permit a question—and the only way in which he