

Electoral Boundaries Commission

these appointments to be made. He also has to make the necessary arrangements in case the desired persons are not available. The wording of my amendment, which is a bit lengthy, therefore tries to take care of these contingencies. With that explanation, Mr. Chairman, I shall in a moment read and present the amendment. As I say, this is based on the idea that we think these commissions should be completely independent and that there is still a little suggestion of partisanship in the present arrangement whereby two of them are named, one by the leader of the largest political party in the country and the other by the leader of the second largest political party in the country, even though their titles in the bill are those of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

I therefore move, Mr. Chairman:

That clause 6 of Bill C-72 be amended by striking out subclauses (1), (2) and (3) thereof, and by substituting therefor the following:

"(1) The chairman of the commission for a province shall be appointed by the chief justice of the province from among the judges of the court over which he presides, and the two other members other than the representation commissioner shall be appointed by the chief justice of the province from among such persons coming within any of the following classes as the chief justice deems suitable, that is to say:

(a) the chief electoral officer, the surveyor-general or the registrar of vital statistics of the province or the holder of any similar office in the province; or

(b) the president or other similar officer of or a member of the faculty of, a university, college or other educational institution providing courses at a post-secondary school level in the province; except that not more than one member shall be appointed from among persons coming within the class described in paragraph (a) and not more than one member shall be appointed from among persons coming within the class described in paragraph (b), and in the event that within either or both of those classes there is no such person able to act as a member of the commission the chief justice of the province, with the approval of the representation commissioner, shall appoint such member or both of such members, as the case may be, from among such persons resident in the province as the chief justice deems suitable.

(2) In the event that there is no judge of the court over which the chief justice of the province presides able to act as chairman of the commission, or where for any reason no appointment of a chairman or of either or both of the two other members other than the representation commissioner is made within the time provided therefor by this act, the Chief Justice of Canada or in the event of his absence or incapacity the senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Canada shall make the appointment or appointments from among such persons resident in the province as he deems suitable.";

and by renumbering subclause (4) as subclause (3).

If hon. members have an opportunity to look at this and compare it with clause 6 as we now have it, they will see that this proposed amendment strikes out the first three subclauses and puts in the two new

ones that the amendment outlines. Then it retains the present subclause (4) but renumbers it as subclause (3). The total effect of the amendment is to leave intact the provision for the appointment of the chairman of each commission, and to leave intact the fact that the representation commissioner is a member of the commission, but to make this alteration that we propose, namely that the other two, instead of being appointed on the nomination of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, will be appointed in the manner indicated from among the categories set out in this amendment.

I dare to believe, Mr. Chairman, from the discussion that we had on this matter on second reading, the discussions we have had on this matter in the past and the general desire that this whole business of redistribution shall be as far away from partisan politics as it is possible to make it, that this amendment will commend itself generally to hon. members of the house.

The Chairman: Is the committee ready for the question?

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Chairman, I am sure we all agree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that the unanimous desire of this whole house is to avoid any semblance of partisanship whatsoever, although none of us had time to master the long, involved and detailed amendment which he has brought forward. I know the hon. member would think it an insult if we accepted this amendment at such short notice, because it certainly is worthy of much more careful consideration than we can give it between 9.57 and ten o'clock.

The hon. member says he wishes to avoid partisanship, and of course he does. He refers to a wide category of people. I can think, for instance, in this connection of one university in the province of which I have some knowledge where the head of one of the departments happens to be the president of the political party for which the hon. member is now speaking. I am not sure whether that diminishes the partisanship, or whether it would not be better to let the nomination be in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. Also in the same university the president happens to have been a former leader of one of the major political parties of this country and a premier of a province. I am sure he is entirely divorced from any political suggestions whatsoever, but I would just as soon accept the nomination of a politician, the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, as I would one who due to circumstances over which he unfortunately,