

*Employment in Public Service*

house, or local associations of parties in this house, do not require membership in the party from anyone who wishes to be a candidate. If such is the case that is the business of the party concerned, although it seems very strange to me that that should be so. As far as our party is concerned there are very few cases where it is possible for anyone who is not already a member of the party to be a standard bearer for the party.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Can the hon. member tell us how long the period of probation is?

**Mr. Walker:** Two minutes.

**Mr. Lewis:** Does the hon. member mean that I have only two minutes left or does he mean that the period of probation is only two minutes? If the minister did not ask the question just to be funny but really wants to know, I will be very pleased to educate him. In our party the provincial constitutions dealing with the qualifications of candidates vary somewhat. Some require six months' membership and some require a year's membership in the party before a person can become a candidate. However, I must say there are exceptions. Under some constitutions the provincial council is given authority to make certain exceptions in cases where that is justified, but by and large a candidate for the New Democratic Party must already have been a member of the party for at least six months. In fact, it seems to me that I saw a provincial constitution which only required three months' membership for candidates.

**Mr. Knowles:** Would the hon. member mind if I asked the Minister of Transport how long he was a member of a political party before he got his nomination?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I became a member in 1936, so the hon. gentleman can do his own arithmetic.

**Mr. Knowles:** Was the minister a member of his party all the time he was a civil servant?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I think I can say fairly that I always voted that way.

• (5:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Lewis:** As a matter of fact this short exchange between the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the Minister of Transport shows the absurdity of the proposal which we were forced to accept in the joint committee and against which I voted. I may

[Mr. Lewis.]

say that all members of the opposition parties, and one senator who was appointed by the Liberals so I assume he was a Liberal senator, voted for the amendment which I moved. All government members voted against it. The exchange we have just heard shows the absurdity of the situation. Of course the Minister of Transport was a Liberal all the time he was in the office of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and in the Prime Minister's office giving valuable advice and exercising his great capacity for thought and manoeuvre which he has shown on the floor of this house and elsewhere.

As I said to the special joint committee, what has always irked me about the law with regard to the political rights of civil servants has been its invitation to members of the public service to breach the law. Some hon. members may know that I was a national officer of the C.C.F. for years and lived in Ottawa. I can say that I knew many civil servants who, contrary to the law as it then was, made contributions to various political parties including my own. I knew some who made contributions to the major political parties at that time. They sometimes did it under the table and sometimes used the subterfuge of having their wives make the contribution.

This is the kind of humiliating, basically unlawful subterfuge which you force honourable men and women who have a political interest to use because you deny them the ordinary rights of citizens. The idea that an employee loses his loyalty to his employer because his employer is a Liberal, a Conservative or a New Democrat and the employee is a member of another political party is contrary to my experience both in private industry and in the public service. There is no sense to it. There is no reason for the Minister of Transport—he is here and I say it in his presence—to become visibly flustered when he is asked whether he was a Liberal at the time he was in the public service.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman. The suggestion that I was flustered is rather like some of the other suggestions that are made, sometimes irresponsibly, about other ministers. It does not bother me. I was a Tory for 20 years and I have advertised that fact. At the end of 20 years I could not take it any longer and I became a Liberal. I have been a Liberal ever since and I am still proud of it.