

Electoral Boundaries Commission

go all the way in redistribution and make it a completely non-partisan proposition. I hope that before long there will have been enough discussion about the matter so we can make a decision on it, but I suggest that this amendment does meet the points that the Minister of Transport set out on the 10th of March and that it should be adopted.

Mr. Nielsen: Will the hon. gentleman permit one question? Does he suggest that individuals in the categories he has listed in his amendment would be completely devoid of any political feelings at all and that this would therefore ensure that no political considerations would be present if such people were appointed to the commissions?

Mr. Knowles: It has been our experience in this country that people who spend part of their lives in highly partisan activity but who are then appointed to positions such as judges do manage to become impartial in their judgments despite their past partisan political activity. I think it is possible to get people of this type to do this job. In this whole discussion I have cited the Manitoba experience. People like to twit us once in a while about political considerations, but look what I am approving. I am approving of a commission which would have on it the chief justice who, when he was in politics, was a Conservative. With regard to the president of the University of Manitoba, those of us in Manitoba know what his politics happen to be.

An hon. Member: What are they?

Mr. Knowles: He does not belong to our party, and he is not a Conservative. The chief electoral officer of the province has been a civil servant for a long while and I doubt that he has any political connection. Certainly I think the example there answers the hon. member's question, that no matter what political connections people may have had in the past the best chance we have of getting people who will do an impartial job is to choose people in these categories.

Mr. Starr: May I ask the hon. member a question? From his own knowledge can he refer us to any commission or board set up by a government in the past where only the chairman was nominated by the government and the chairman was allowed to select the other members of the commission on his own initiative?

Mr. Knowles: I do not know whether there are any such examples, but I do not think

that invalidates this proposition at all. This proposal is that the chief justice name the chairman and that there be a set group from whom he must name the chairman. That set group consists of the judges of the court over which the chief justice presides. Then we give him the authority to name two more commissioners from categories A and B as provided in the amendment. I suggest that this provides sufficient safeguards.

I draw the attention of the hon. member for Ontario to the fact that if it is not possible to make choices from these categories, because people are not available or do not accept, and a choice has to be made outside of these categories, we change the person who shall make the appointments. The appointment is then made by the chief justice of Canada with the concurrence of the representation commissioner. This provision is necessary, of course, because we have to provide for all contingencies.

Mr. Deachman: Mr. Chairman, I would object to the hon. member's amendment on two grounds. First of all, I think it is over-complicated. It is like the plans for assembling a scale model of the *Cutty Sark*. We do not need anything as complicated as that. In the second place, in my opinion his categories, which are one of the complexities, do not provide for the choosing of people who are likely to orient themselves toward a task of this kind. It is hard for me to envisage a surveyor withdrawing his eye from the cross hairs of his telescope to take up this task. I think it would be far better to leave it in the hands of the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister to select people whom they know have dealt with the complexities of an election in the past because there is no more complex organization of voluntary persons in the country. I think this is the best way to let it stand.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, I am very much interested in the debate which has taken place so far this morning, and the indication from members on the government side that they are not fully in accord with the apparent stand taken by the Minister of Transport, who seems to us to be inclined to support this amendment. The Minister of Transport covered the field rather widely a little while ago, and I hope I will have the same latitude from the chair.

I want to express my disappointment with regard to the attitude of the Minister of Transport on this matter. I think members on both