

Electoral Boundaries Commission

proposed by the hon. member for—I often forget his constituency but I think sometimes we might refer to him as the hon. member from heaven because he is so often referred to as the constitutional conscience of the house, and because so many other references are made to him respecting his knowledge of the rules and procedures of parliament.

An hon. Member: The rule of purity.

Mr. Nielsen: Yes, the rule of purity. I want to say something about this for a moment, because the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has spoken at great length about the appearance we must give to the people of Canada in this legislature. For the moment I forget which great philosopher came out first with the expression, but I am sure the hon. member is familiar with it, that one must not only appear to be pure; he must be pure, because there are so many variations in the arguments he presents from time to time, not only with respect to this measure but with regard to other matters.

Before I was distracted I was speaking about the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra and the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard. These two hon. gentlemen had the courage to stand up and express their opposition to the amendment. I would like to see the hon. member for York-Scarborough, who has been paying very painful attention to everything said in this debate, state his position. Similarly I would like to hear from the political scientist in the committee, the hon. member for Northumberland.

Mr. Moreau: Did the hon. member suggest that the hon. member for York-Scarborough should get up and state a point of view with which he did not agree? I happen to support the amendment.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, now I know where the hon. member stands. More of those backbenchers should get up and adopt a similar course.

Mr. Knowles: You will know where they stand if you let us have a vote.

Mr. Nielsen: The hon. member says let us have a vote and we will find out where everybody stands. I would point out that this is the first time I have contributed to the discussion, while he has been on his feet several times. In the words of the Minister of Transport, I would like to tell him that this is a matter which deserves very careful consideration.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman,—

The Chairman: Order. Could the hon. member address the Chair? There has been an exchange of conversations and remarks on both sides, which make it very difficult for the Chair to follow the speech of the hon. member.

Mr. Nielsen: I do not for the moment intend to question the ruling you have just made but perhaps, with great respect, it might have been better directed to other hon. members who are interrupting.

The Chairman: The hon. member should realize I am not objecting to his speaking but to other hon. members interrupting him while he is speaking.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for over-ruling the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who does not appear to want to let me talk. I am glad to see that the democratic safeguards are in capable hands.

I think more of the backbenchers on the other side should be just as courageous as the hon. members I have just mentioned for Vancouver Quadra and Vancouver-Burrard and that inimitable member for York-Scarborough who has also taken a stand on the amendment. I think however that had the Minister of Justice not come in when he did to make his statement, after whipping the rug from under the Minister of Transport, there might have been more of those opinions expressed with that complete field of expression to which the Liberal party is so consecrated from time to time, when it sees fit.

I think one of the reasons why this amendment was put forward is probably that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and his friends are probably a little miffed because, under the bill as it stands, it is the prime minister who has to make one of these appointments and the leader of the opposition who has to make the other. I think some personal objection to this system has entered into the sound judgment which the hon. member usually shows with regard to these matters. Perhaps if we could have commissions made up of five members, of which the hon. member's own leader was able to appoint one, the amendment would not have been put forward in its present form.

The hon. member made a great case for the impartiality of the judges who would have to make these appointments. However the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona left the impression that impartiality of this type among our judges could not altogether be expected. As a matter of fact, the legislation