

*Electoral Boundaries Commission*

these matters. Well, I do not think it is possible to avoid at least the semblance of partisanship when you are dealing with something political—and I am using the word in the best sense now, with a small “p”. There has to be some, and it cannot be avoided no matter what semantics are used when framing the legislation.

I think the clause before us is as good as any clause that could be prepared. Like the Minister of Transport, I should be glad to hear any arguments which might be advanced by hon. members generally in favour of a change, other than the wish to avoid politics which, I say frankly, is impossible superficially. I have no doubt that a change would be more pleasing to the feelings of hon. gentlemen in the farther part of the house, and one can understand this wish that either they should be recognized or that somebody else should not. But these are the facts of life, the facts of our political life.

We have a Prime Minister who is an officer of the house and a Leader of the Opposition who is also an officer of the house, and they are the only ones in this category. I agree that whoever occupied the office of prime minister or leader of the opposition would exercise the authority given to them under this provision in a manner which would be entirely creditable both to themselves and to parliament, and we can be entirely confident that they would make the best choice possible in these circumstances, even though the choice might prove disappointing to someone or other. After all, whether right honourable or not, they are both honourable gentlemen. They have the spotlight on them. They have an obligation to the nation as well as to their parties.

This amendment—I spoke of it rather lightly last night—is trying to escape politics as such. But we are not going to escape at least political association or affiliation. There is nothing bad about this. Indeed, I hope everybody in Canada, outside, possibly, the clergy—and I am not so sure even about them—has some political association or affiliation or at least a political interest; and if you are going to choose people who are entirely removed from that you are going to get political noodles or something like that; I was about to use a term which might not have been in keeping with this occasion.

This amendment names certain official categories in the service of provincial governments. I agree with what was said by the minister about the difficulty of ordering them to serve, or even asking them to serve. Which

people are listed? There is the provincial chief electoral officer. There is the surveyor general, whoever he may be. There is the registrar of vital statistics, who is sometimes a nurse. Then the proposal speaks of those holding “similar offices”. If that does not take in the whole gamut from a caretaker to the president of the council, I do not know what does.

Then you get a greater disparity in the section below; you get college presidents, college teachers, college instructors; and finally, if you cannot get one of those you pick out anyone you like. The load is put on the chief justice of the court. That is one of my chief criticisms of this amendment, and I think the Minister of Justice should express his opinion on this matter. I do not think the chief justice of any superior court, or any inferior court, should be put in the political position where he is ordered by this parliament to make choices within the whole field that is mentioned here.

This provision is not so wide in the bill that we have before us. He makes a choice from his own court or another court, but it has to be a judge, someone who is theoretically and legally under his control. But when you go beyond that and, as I said, take in everybody in the province whatever his political leaning, you may inadvertently make the most partisan appointment.

I think the chief justice is further removed from politics than many of the people mentioned in this amendment. Many of these officers are appointed for political purposes or political award. Perhaps some judges are, too, from time to time; but they have other qualities as well, and they become divorced from politics to a much greater degree than people in provincial governments. I am not speaking of any particular provincial government, but this refers to all provincial governments. I know from my own experience in Nova Scotia that in the past we did not have as strict a standard of civil service appointments as you might have in the national government.

I do not think it is a good thing to include everybody in the employ of the provincial government. It would possibly enable some provinces to get representation which they otherwise might not get; but if the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition made the choices that I know they would make—and I am not speaking of the present occupants of those offices, although I certainly would include them—their choices and selections would commend themselves to the