

Newfoundland

ago, seems now to be entering its final stages. We join in welcoming Newfoundland into the Canadian community of provinces, the Dominion of Canada. To her, if she should choose to ratify the agreement which will be brought before us in due course, we extend the warmest possible welcome. At the same time we express the sincere hope that divine Providence will set His seal upon the greater Canada to the end that she may go forward and realize fully her great destiny.

I hope that the terms of agreement between our two countries, as finally approved, will be so satisfactory to both the people of Canada and the people of Newfoundland that it will stand unchallenged for many years to come. I confess, though, that I have felt some misgiving arising out of the fact that, when the second referendum took place on July 22, 1948, only 44 per cent of the electorate voted for confederation. It is true, I admit, that, of those who voted, a majority voted for union. I do not suggest at all that anyone was at fault except the electors themselves, in that they did not get out to the polls. I believe, however, that we all could have felt more secure and happier about the result if sufficient interest had been taken by all the electorate in Newfoundland so that, when the vote took place, there would have been an undoubted, over-all majority of the electors supporting union. I hope of course that the great majority of the people of Newfoundland will eventually come to understand and appreciate the step that is being taken and that they will eventually give to it their wholehearted support.

Much has been said this afternoon about the people of Newfoundland and about their great country. Thus far all the speakers have extolled the virtues of Newfoundlanders, and quite rightly so. I share in the admiration that has been expressed for this great people and for what they have accomplished under, as we all understand, great difficulties. If the Newfoundlanders confederate with us, they will definitely enrich the sum total of the qualities of the people of greater Canada. Their spiritual, moral, physical and cultural qualities are certainly no less than our own. We know of course that their country possesses resources and strategic values of great importance. We appreciate all of these; nevertheless the advantage will not be all on one side. Let me say that if we are fortunate enough to have Newfoundland join with Canada, Canada will gain much. At the same time, let me say that Newfoundland also will gain much. We have here the greatest country on the face of the earth, and I say that in full realization of the magnitude of the statement I am making. I believe, and have always believed, that Canada has a great

destiny. I believe that in the years to come Canada will prove to be the real bulwark of the whole of America, not only materially, but spiritually and morally as well.

I have always appreciated the fact that Canada is the one part of America that retains by statute observance of the Sabbath day. That fact gives to our country a moral strength which cannot be found in any other part of America. It may not be appreciated now, but I am strongly hoping that certain forces in our country, who today are moving to repeal that statute and to throw open the Sabbath day to the same activities that take place on week days, will forget their aims and objectives and join with us in maintaining in this country the Sabbath day as it should be.

When Newfoundland comes in, if she chooses to approve this agreement, I express the hope that she too will join with us in trying to defend what we consider to be one of the fundamental strengths of our great country. We have in Canada, in my opinion, a people second to none anywhere in the world. We have a country which, if properly developed on sound economic lines, can yield to its people a standard of living unequalled in any part of the world. We also have in our country, and it is a fact we all appreciate, a forward-looking people who, though they are sometimes given to inertia, when they are moved gather momentum and in due course, I think, find the right path and do what is right.

I say these things for the reason that I do not want it said at any time that, on this historic occasion, we did not point out to our friends from Newfoundland who may join with us, as we hope they will, that they are fortunate in the opportunity that confederation offers to them, just as we are fortunate in having them join with us. When our country, in very fact, reaches from sea to sea, Mr. Speaker, let us express the hope that, from one end of that greater Canada to the other, our people will join hands and march forward determined to make this country the finest place in the world in which to live; to build the happiest people it is possible to find anywhere on the face of the earth; and indeed to build here for the western hemisphere a real bulwark, spiritual, material and moral.

Hon. Brooke Claxton (Minister of National Defence): The speakers who have preceded me have all referred in the most fitting and eloquent terms to the importance that the entry of Newfoundland will have in the consummation of the dream, the work and the achievements of confederation. One newspaper said that this is one of the great historic developments of the year. This, sir,

[Mr. Low.]