

*Newfoundland*

of Canada during so many years. The right hon. member for Glengarry (Mr. Mackenzie King), in welcoming the delegates to Ottawa on June 25, 1947, expressed, I believe, the sentiment of all Canadians when he said:

In welcoming you, we welcome neighbours and kinsfolk who, with us, owe a common allegiance to the crown and whose countries are members of the British commonwealth. History and geography have given us much in common. We enjoy with you the heritage of British freedom and the even older heritage of Christian civilization. We have shared together the perils and sacrifices of two world wars. Side by side, we face the uncertainties of the post-war world.

The leader of this group this afternoon mentioned some of the common problems we must face along with the people of Newfoundland. The people in Newfoundland will be a long distance from Ottawa. They will experience the difficulties which others, who are also a long distance from central Canada, have experienced since confederation. I believe this parliament must be very sure the acquisition of Newfoundland should not be regarded as a new empire to be exploited by vested interests.

I should like to discuss this evening a problem which so far has not received very much consideration during this debate, namely, the point of view of the 71,334 or the 47.66 per cent of the people in Newfoundland who voted for responsible government. Very frankly, I admit I cannot pose as a competent authority on Newfoundland's history or problems. I did, however, spend a week in Newfoundland in December. It was something of a shock to me to find so much bitterness there over the question of confederation. This is a problem which the rest of us in Canada would do well to consider carefully. I realize it is not primarily a Canadian problem, but we must face the fact that 47.66 per cent of the people voted for responsible government. Here is a minority coming into confederation feeling that they have real grievances.

I should like to take a little time tonight to present a point of view which I found in Newfoundland. I might say I was rather surprised to find that Newfoundland is so isolated from Canada. I happened to be there the day after the terms of union were signed. The following day, when the by-election was held in the constituency of Digby-Annapolis-Kings, I was curious to ascertain the outcome of the elections, and I checked with the only radio system there, as well as with the newspapers, to find out what word there was from Canada. I was told that news from Canada had to reach Newfoundland via London and the people of Newfoundland would not expect to hear any news of the by-election on the radio until the fol-

lowing day. It was a matter of surprise that we had not had Canadian Press service in Newfoundland during these years. You will recall, too, that during the years we in Canada have had very little information concerning events in Newfoundland.

If I had not spent that week in Newfoundland, I would have allowed this resolution to pass without raising the point I plan to discuss with the members of the house tonight. I should like to remind you that, as has already been pointed out, Newfoundland played a very active part in world war I. They added to their national debt to the extent of over \$50 million and then, in the years following the war, found themselves in a difficult financial position. In 1931, Newfoundland appealed to the British government for financial assistance, but was not satisfied with the terms offered by the British.

In 1933, Newfoundland consented to the setting-up of the Newfoundland royal commission, better known as the Amulree commission. The king's warrant sets out the objective of this commission.

—to examine into the future of Newfoundland and in particular to report on the financial situation and prospects therein.

The recommendations of the commission are well known, but it might be mentioned that, in producing the papers relating to the report of the royal commission, it was pointed out that:

His Majesty's government in the United Kingdom would think it a little less than a disaster if the oldest colony in the British empire were to default in its obligations. On the other hand it is clear that the present burden of the debt is more than the people of Newfoundland can, for the time being, discharge unaided despite the utmost effort.

The recommendations were as contained in the report of the Newfoundland royal commission, one recommendation being as follows:

The existing form of government would be suspended until such time as the island may become self-supporting again.

A second recommendation, found in the report of that commission, reads as follows:

It would be understood that, as soon as the island's difficulties are overcome and the country is again self-supporting, responsible government, on request from the people of Newfoundland, would be restored.

Since 1933, the people in this important island have been denied the right to elect their members to transact the business of the country. As I stated, it was clearly set forth in 1933 and 1934 that this was a temporary arrangement and that, when the economic position of the island improved, the democratic rights of the people would be restored.

The war years brought prosperity to Newfoundland, as they did to many other parts of