

Newfoundland

Mr. St. Laurent: I am told it has been so long since elections were held in Newfoundland that most of the people are unable to indicate what their political faith is. On the other hand, I have received representations which were along the lines of the statement made by the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply (Mr. Winters) about the people of Canada generally, that they are Liberals and it behooves us to go out and see that they vote that way.

Mr. Knowles: All public men over seventy will turn out to be Liberals.

Mr. Graydon: Perhaps the Prime Minister might want to ask the minister of reconstruction if he would care to revise those figures he gave the house the other day. I would ask him this question. Does the government anticipate arranging the election so that there will be representation from Newfoundland in this particular session, provided that this session goes its normal length?

Mr. Knowles: Fishing again.

Mr. St. Laurent: I hope it will not be possible to have representation during this session, because that would mean that the session would have to go on until late in the summer. The matter cannot be dealt with until after March 31, and it then requires two months at the very least in order to arrange an election. That would account for April and May. I would hope that by the time April and May were over we would be nearing the close of this session.

As to the other question, that matter has also been under consideration and discussion. We were told that it would be unfortunate if gentlemen were elected to this parliament and then a general dissolution came about as a result of which they were not able to take their seats but were forced to go back for re-election, or in other words to be elected twice before they really became members of parliament. We would have to wait and see how events developed in order to determine whether or not the holding of a by-election or by-elections would provide those who were elected with an opportunity of being introduced to the Speaker and taking their seats in the house.

Mr. Knowles: Purely for the information of the people of Newfoundland and of course not because we here are interested, the Prime Minister might solve this whole problem by telling us the date of the election.

Mr. St. Laurent: If the Prime Minister knew the date of the election, he would be glad to confide it to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Fulton: There is one consideration which I feel should be borne in mind and given careful thought in making appointments from Newfoundland to the other house. A number of hon. members have observed—with some degree of deprecation, I take it—that there is in Newfoundland a substantial body of opinion which is opposed, we will say, not to the idea but to the method of confederation. I feel that that fact should be carefully borne in mind when appointments are being made to the Senate. That body of opinion, which we understand is substantial, is entitled to representation in the six appointments to be made to the other chamber. I think we can all take it as a fact that the purpose of the other house is, among other things, to provide representation for all groups of opinion, particularly minority groups, in the Canadian parliament. I would strongly urge that this matter be taken into consideration. Perhaps the Prime Minister would be willing to give us some assurance that that fact would be borne in mind when making those appointments.

Mr. St. Laurent: The only assurance I would care to give the hon. member is that we shall endeavour to take into consideration, in making those appointments, all factors that will tend to bring about a state of satisfaction among the people of Newfoundland.

Mr. Drew: That is not one of the things that are to be referred to the royal commission to find out what will enrich the life of the country, is it?

Mr. St. Laurent: I think there are many things which would enrich the life of the country merely by being omitted from discussion in this house.

Mr. Graydon: That is not all on the one side, either.

Mr. MacInnis: Some of this debate on appointments to the Senate has been in a jocular vein and perhaps some of it has been serious. But if it has done nothing else, it has pointed out the farcical way in which appointments to our Senate are made. Perhaps the debate also offers a good opportunity for this house to consider whether we should not change the way in which such appointments are made? I have been reading editorials in the press from one end of Canada to the other, and what is said about the other place is not particularly complimentary. I was reading recently one of the few books on politics written by a Canadian—"Democratic Government and Politics", by Professor J. A. Correy—and what he says about the Canadian Senate is not particularly complimentary either. After many years as a member of parliament, I find myself in