

*Newfoundland*

government. It is quite fair to say, without any breach of confidence, that some of the delegation were in favour of joining Canada and some were not. They represented their country in all fairness. They fought hard for what they considered to be just and reasonable terms, and then all but one of them signed the agreement which we are now seeking to implement.

I should like to pay my tribute to all seven of those gentlemen for their fairness, and the tenacity with which they represented the views of their people. I believe they would also agree with us that the terms are just and reasonable. Otherwise they would not have signed. It is those terms which are now being put forward by the parliament of Canada to the parliament at Westminster for the needed ratification.

I should like to quote from the remarks of one of the Newfoundland delegation, a lawyer, one of those gold medallists of Dalhousie university to whom reference was made by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Dickey) last week. He represents many important clients in Newfoundland. I refer to the speech of Mr. John B. McEvoy, K.C., on this subject, made at the Ottawa Canadian Club last week. As he had been chairman of the convention, his remarks have particular significance, and I believe great importance, in this connection. In his speech he said:

In view of allegations repeatedly made to the contrary, I want to make it perfectly clear that neither Canada nor any Canadian participated directly, or indirectly, in the recent decision of the people of Newfoundland to seek union with Canada. On July 13, 1943, the then Prime Minister, the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, O.M., stated on the floor of the House of Commons that any idea of bringing Newfoundland into confederation must initiate "on the part of the people of Newfoundland rather than on the part of members of this house, certainly at this particular time. If the people of Newfoundland should ever decide that they wish to enter the Canadian federation and should make that decision clear beyond all possibility of misunderstanding, Canada would give most sympathetic consideration to the proposal."

Then Mr. McEvoy went on:

This position was scrupulously maintained by the government of Canada all the way throughout, until the decision was reached by the people of Newfoundland and formal request was made by the government of Newfoundland to the government of Canada to receive a delegation from Newfoundland for the purpose of negotiating the terms of union.

To those who have a faint heart, or an obstructive inclination, I would commend these words from among those with which Mr. McEvoy concluded his speech. He said:

For my own part, as a Newfoundlander who supported the cause of union, and as one who signed the terms of union, which will doubtless result in my eternal glorification, or damnation, depending upon one's point of view, it will be a proud day for

me when the union is consummated, for I have long satisfied myself that, as part of this great dominion, the Newfoundlander will then take his proper place in the sun. Union with Canada brings to Newfoundland the possibility of realizing itself and of taking its place in a great federation of free and autonomous states. It means Newfoundland's emancipation from the stranglehold of isolation. For Canadians I can only, of course, dare to hope that the entry of Newfoundland into confederation will be the occasion of pride and joy.

I am sure that is the spirit in which all of us on this side of the house would like to see the debate conducted and concluded. That is the spirit with which we would like all Canadians to greet the entry of Newfoundland, to stretch out the hand of fellowship, the hand of brotherhood to these brothers in the British commonwealth who have been our neighbours for so long, and are soon to become sons and daughters of Canada. They will soon become that, Mr. Speaker, if the resolution passes and goes forward with the support of the house—I am sure it has the support of the people of Canada and the people of Newfoundland—so that we may join together in one greater union to make an even greater Canada than we have ever known.

**Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, no one could possibly disagree with the word picture painted by my hon. friend who has just resumed his seat as, in concluding his peroration, he declared that it would mean much to Canada and to Newfoundland to join in confederation. As he read from the confederation debates of 1865 I read from those debates when the Hon. George Brown with pride envisaged the day when Newfoundland would join and become part of the Dominion of Canada.

Last week we on this side of the house joined in support of the agreement tentatively entered into between the representatives of the Canadian government and the representatives of Newfoundland. We agreed as to the favourable position in which it would place Canada, both nationally and internationally, to be joined by Newfoundland. There is, however, no inconsistency in the unanimity of our support last week and the stand now taken by my leader in the amendment he has moved. The amendment has nothing to do with the desirability of confederation. We supported that desirability of union and we are unchanged in that view. But, sir, believing as we do in confederation, we demand that the principles of confederation as set out in the British North America Act be complied with by the parliament of this country, to the end that our constitution shall be upheld. As I listened to my hon. friend the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton), who apparently would make shortcuts through the constitution, I was reminded that in 1925