

Newfoundland

All kinds of abuses crept into the pre-referendum campaign. Aided and abetted by members of the commission government, the advocates of confederation openly led an intensive campaign of scandal, trickery and sectarianism. The propaganda in favour of responsible government was not only delayed in post offices but in many cases it was destroyed. The responsible government league goes so far as to accuse the leaders of those who advocate confederation, of pitting Orangemen against Roman Catholics on the island. In this connection, the league quotes the rallying cry given its members by the Grand Master.

However, it happened that Canada accepted that second vote which was taken on July 22, 1948, and after such irregularities, after that infringement of the British North America Act, we are now told that things must be done quickly, that the debate must necessarily be shortened, so that Newfoundland's entry may be decided as soon as possible.

That is not satisfactory, especially since the scanty details we have been able to obtain do not permit us to size up the extent of the burden which the entry of Newfoundland into the confederation will mean for the Canadian ratepayers. I submit that we have not been given all the information which would enable us to analyse the importance of the action we are going to take, because if we are to rely on what the press has brought to our knowledge on various occasions, it would appear that Newfoundland's entry into confederation is going to be exceedingly costly for us.

Here, Mr. Chairman, there is a third point I wish to make. As the cost of Newfoundland's entry into confederation will no doubt come out of the present revenues of the Canadian government, it is clear that the government will draw from the income tax as well as from all other existing revenues, a considerable part of which belongs to the provinces, and that is why we were and still are right in claiming that the provinces should have been consulted. The province of Quebec especially should have been consulted, because of the marking of boundaries between Labrador and that province, which is a matter included in this bill. No doubt that is why the premier of Quebec used these words which I quote from a statement he made on November 8, 1947:

That is a problem of the highest importance, concerning as it does all provinces in Canada, and especially the province of Quebec. It seems to me altogether discourteous for the federal authorities to take such important action without even consulting provincial authorities, particularly those of the province of Quebec, deeply interested in this matter.

(Text):

Mr. McIvor: I enjoyed very much the intelligent presentation which was given to us

yesterday to show why we should have this union, but more important than trade, more important than national defence is something else which has not yet been presented to this committee. I refer to the religious union that exists already between Canada and Newfoundland. I can give you a concrete example. The advisory board of the Salvation Army, of which I am a member, has jurisdiction over Canada, Newfoundland and Bermuda. Perhaps this is one of the indirect reasons why we are to have union at this time. I say that when the Christian church leads, all others can intelligently follow.

Mr. St. Laurent: The hon. member for Lake Centre asked certain questions. I have not all the material here but in order that the record may not appear incomplete I shall attempt to give a provisional answer. First, I should like to say that I appreciate the attitude which has been taken by hon. members in respect of this proposal. Personally I share the views expressed by the hon. member for Vancouver East, that it is not apt to be helpful, in eradicating the irritation that naturally comes from losing out in any contest by popular vote, to be constantly referring to that fact.

Rules were set for this matter. It so happens that there was a substantial minority that did not have its way and that would now like to see the thing started over again. There are some people who would like to see a more recent test determined by a vote started over again, but that is not the way democracies work.

In this case there was originally an undertaking by the government of the United Kingdom—I am not attempting to make a defence of the government of the United Kingdom, I am simply stating the facts which I think afford justification—to restore responsible government to Newfoundland on demand or on request—I do not remember exactly what the terms were—when the situation had improved.

In December, 1945, the government of the United Kingdom decided—there was no other government in Newfoundland at that time than the commission of government composed of a governor appointed by the United Kingdom, three residents of the United Kingdom, and three residents of Newfoundland—that they were not the ones to make the request for the restoration of responsible government and determined that there would be a national