

Newfoundland

Mr. Raymond (Beauharnois-Laprairie): Would the hon. member allow me to ask a question?

Mr. Dion (Lake St. John-Roberval): Surely.

Mr. Raymond (Beauharnois-Laprairie): I understand that the hon. member is referring to what I said this afternoon, but when he adds that people protested against the privy council's award, is he referring to a stand I would have taken or to an expression of opinion on my part?

Mr. Dion (Lake St. John-Roberval): No, I am not referring to him personally but I think that people of the very school of thought to which I believe the hon. member belongs have voiced that opinion.

Mr. Raymond (Beauharnois-Laprairie): I am responsible for my own actions, not for those of others.

Mr. Dion (Lake St. John-Roberval): Now that I am talking about this question regarding which I have read the expression of divergent views I must say that the hon. member does not agree at all with his friends from *Le Devoir*, because not later than two or three days ago, I read an article by Mr. Sauriol in which he said he accepted the entry of Newfoundland into confederation, that it was a good thing for Canada, technically and geographically speaking.

That on which they disagreed was the procedure to follow. I quite understand that there can be differences of opinion on this point. It is understandable and I am not shocked at all.

Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak at length. I believe I have shown that all these points raised at the last moment are not designed to establish whether Newfoundland should be admitted into confederation, in accordance with section 146 of the British North America Act, whether we are seeking an amendment to the constitution, or whether we are violating certain parts of the act, but solely to establish, as I previously pointed out, whether we should carry on that game of political football begun quite some time ago.

As far as I am concerned, I feel we should stick to the point. It is unfortunate that all these questions raised in the house become strictly constitutional matters.

True, their constitution has its importance; it should be respected. I for one wish that we may soon have an autonomous Canadian body

[Mr. Dion (Lake St. John-Roberval).]

empowered to amend our constitution without having to make a humiliating pilgrimage to London, as we are now compelled to do.

In that connection, I take the opportunity of congratulating the Prime Minister on the announcement he made last week over the radio. In the meantime, we cannot by ourselves amend our constitution. We have no choice, so we must act as we do, no matter how unpleasant the procedure may be to us. I hope that before long all Canadians, those from the provinces and those from the dominion—in fact they are the same persons—imbued with a true Canadian spirit will be fond of their province because it is a part of Canada. They will work towards mutual understanding between the various provinces, placing common interests above petty electoral practices, in order to have a constitution which will guarantee full and complete justice to each and every one.

Mr. Wilfrid LaCroix (Quebec-Montmorency): Mr. Speaker, I feel duty bound to make a few remarks in connection with this debate.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that I have no doubt whatever about the sincerity of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) in his statement on the matter. He expressed his opinion frankly and directly, in his usual straightforward manner.

Unfortunately I am unable to say as much of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew), especially after reading some past statements of his, as reported by the *Globe and Mail* of September 8, 1939. I quote:

We have strayed from the road traced by the fathers of confederation. The powerful central government that the provinces have sought to establish is shackled by petty politics. The constitutional difficulties which prevent adoption of urgently needed efficient social legislation, could be overcome without waiting for an amendment to the British North America Act.

And at Fort William, on January 26, 1939, the leader of the opposition said:

I favour the strengthening of national ties and the removal from the provinces of all powers inconsistent with those of the federal government, not required by the provincial administration.

Such was the frame of mind of the hon. member before he became leader of the opposition. Let us see what has been his change of attitude since becoming leader of the opposition. After reading carefully the amendment he submitted to the house, one readily sees that he maintains his centralizing policy, that he wishes the people of Quebec to believe