

Laurent. Mr. St. Laurent, who is Canada's minister of justice, was then acting prime minister of Canada, Mr. King being in Paris. Mr. St. Laurent was asked by a member of the Opposition if the government would extend an invitation to Newfoundland to enter the Canadian federal union. Mr. St. Laurent replied for the government as follows:

As the Hon. members know, just within the past few days an election has been held in Newfoundland for the purpose of constituting an assembly. The position of Canada is still as it has been stated on more than one occasion in this House. If the people of Newfoundland come to the conclusion that they would be happy to throw in their lot with Canada, their representations will be given most earnest and sympathetic consideration. But it has been said on more than one occasion in this House that this is something concerning the inhabitants of the old colony of Newfoundland, and this Government would not wish to appear to be interfering in the affairs of that colony. Their delegates or representatives will be welcomed here as cordially as we can welcome them. I believe there are many Canadians who feel that it would be to the mutual advantage of Canada and Newfoundland to come closer together.

Mr. St. Laurent was followed immediately by Mr. John R. MacNichol, an Opposition member, who said: "If and when Newfoundland should send delegates to Canada to discuss the question of the entry of Newfoundland to Confederation, which I for one favour, I would strongly urge that no effort be made or no suggestion advanced to detach Labrador from Newfoundland." Mr. MacNichol said he had been in Newfoundland and knew how strongly Newfoundlanders felt on this point. Mr. St. Laurent expressed his agreement. I think, Mr. Chairman, we may feel quite sure that Canada would receive a delegation from this house and impart any terms that she was willing to offer. Their only policy in this whole matter is that it must be the Newfoundland people themselves who shall express a wish for confederation. Canada simply won't accept Newfoundland unless the Newfoundland people express a wish for it. The Newfoundland people cannot express a wish for it until they know the terms, and that's

what this resolution asks us to do, to get the terms so that the Newfoundland people can judge for themselves, as they have every right to do.

We also know the attitude of the Opposition in Canada. At their annual conference last summer they passed a resolution calling upon the Government of Canada to extend an invitation to Newfoundland to enter the federal union. And we know the attitude of the Canadian people also. In the Gallup poll held in Canada this summer a big majority of them declared that they would welcome Newfoundland into their federal union.

So now, Mr. Chairman, we know all the factors but one. We know that it is lawful for the Convention to send the delegation to Ottawa. We know that Ottawa will receive the delegation, and receive it cordially. We know that the opposition party will not oppose it. We know that the Canadian people will not oppose it. The only thing we still don't know is what the Newfoundland people want. We don't know whether they want confederation or not — and we're not going to know until they vote in the referendum. All we can do is get the terms and conditions and that's all this resolution calls for. The rest can very safely be left to the people; once they know the terms, they'll know how to make up their minds all right, never you fear.

I am sorry, in a way, that when the committees were set up five weeks ago we didn't set up ten committees instead of nine. While nine committees were getting the facts about Commission government and responsible government, the tenth committee could have been getting the facts about confederation. However, it isn't too late by any means. We can adopt this resolution and then the machinery can start. Word will finally come back to us saying very definitely whether Canada will receive the delegation, and the delegation itself could leave in December or early in January, for Ottawa. They'd probably be back in ten days or a fortnight, with the terms, and then the terms will be before us when we come around finally to discussing forms of government. If we think the terms are good, we'll be able to recommend that confederation on those terms be put before the people in the referendum. If we don't think they're worth putting before the people, we don't have to put them before the people. It's the people who'll decide. They'll have the last word, and the only word that counts. If we ever enter