

*Newfoundland*

occasion to avail themselves of the absence of any similar limitation upon their discretion. The Prime Minister referred to the terms of the agreement which relate to financial arrangements. Without going into them in detail now, I wish to point out another question of principle which is important. Having placed before the appointed representatives of Newfoundland certain proposals in regard to a tax agreement, the following provision is then included:

The subsequent entry into a tax agreement by the government of Canada with any other province will not entitle the government of the province of Newfoundland to any alteration in the terms of its agreement.

The present Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson), while he was premier of Manitoba, the premier of New Brunswick and other premiers who succeeded in obtaining adjustments when other adjustments were made, would have felt themselves greatly injured if they had been subject to any such limitation as this. It seems unusual that the only province, among those accepting agreements in respect to the payment of subsidies in return for taxing powers, to have any limitation placed upon its subsequent right to ask for readjustment should be the new province of Newfoundland, to which we should be extending every courtesy and offering every encouragement. These, however, are details, but I suggest they are worthy of consideration and will be given consideration when we are discussing the precise terms of the agreement.

As has already been pointed out by the Prime Minister, the union of Newfoundland with Canada will represent the fulfilment of the great and challenging vision of those who met in Charlottetown on September 1, 1864, in the hope of bringing together the whole of British North America as one united nation. It will give reality to the dream of Sir John A. Macdonald, whose proposals to Newfoundland for confederation were not first made at the time of the Charlottetown conference but were in fact put forward to Newfoundland in 1858. It is well to remember the significance of the fact that these proposals which were put forward to Newfoundland in 1858 brought the first favourable official response to his contention that steps should then be taken to create a federal union.

When I had the privilege of visiting the confederation chamber in Charlottetown not long ago, I was greatly impressed, as I am sure all other members were who have visited that beautiful room, by these words on the memorial tablet which commemorates that historic meeting. On the tablet are these words: "They builded better than they knew." They built so well that we are seeing before us the fulfilment of the vision of those who

sat there in 1864 and pictured this great union of free people embracing all the territory then known as British North America and extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Macdonald, Cartier, and those associated with them, were disappointed that Newfoundland did not become part of Canada in 1867, but they never despaired of ultimate success. Macdonald's renewed proposals of 1888 gave convincing evidence of the continuing hope that Newfoundland would join with the rest of Canada. Again in 1895, as has already been pointed out, another attempt was made to find a satisfactory basis for union, but again without success. It is not without interest to note that on these earlier occasions the renewed discussions related to the difficult financial conditions in Newfoundland. The present discussions, on the contrary, have taken place in a period of greater prosperity than has ever before been experienced in the island's history.

From those earlier days up to the time of the discussions which have led to the agreement which will be before us for consideration, there has been a continuing hope in the minds of a great many people in Newfoundland and Canada that the vision of the fathers of confederation of one great nation from sea to sea would ultimately be fulfilled.

The motion now before the house calls for a decision whether the bill to bring about the union of Newfoundland with Canada is to be introduced. In fact that is the only issue before us in this motion. Speaking on behalf of all the members of the Progressive Conservative party in this house, and with their unanimous support, I wish to welcome, personally and on their behalf, the introduction of such measures as will complete this union upon terms satisfactory to the people of Newfoundland and the people of Canada. It is neither appropriate nor possible at this stage to discuss any details of the procedure, because we are still to be told what the provisions of the bill will be and the course which is to be followed in the discussion. We are now simply discussing a resolution which, in effect, asks us to express our opinion as to whether or not this house should proceed to deal with such legislation as may be required to bring about the effective union of the sister dominions of Newfoundland and Canada. On that simple question it is difficult to believe there can be any division of opinion, and I join in expressing the hope that the proposal for union, made by Sir John Macdonald so long ago, may soon become a reality. I trust that in the years ahead the people of Newfoundland will be given every reason to have, in ever-increasing measure, confidence in and good will