

*Newfoundland*

gation of any sort. That is what is required by the amendment. On the other hand, I do know that when a partner or colleague seeks my consent, it is not the same thing at all. He is requesting a permission without which he is unable to act.

If, in your speeches, you ask for consent, why not require it in your amendment? This is not at all what this amendment calls for. You are calling for a consultation.

You should first agree on what you want. Then we could talk it over.

Now, as to the theory of the confederation agreement or that of the statute, our opponents tell us they want to put up a fence and set on one side of the fence those who favour confederation, and on the other side those who favour adherence to the statute. We are not concerned now, I think, with defending an opponent or a bitter enemy of confederation. We are merely speaking of those who favour confederation and of those who swear by the statute. The statute merely followed the agreement; the wording of the British North America Act is simply that of the confederation agreement.

Now, may I ask you one thing? If we are to abide by the principle of the confederation agreement, should we consult only the four provinces that existed at the time of the initial pact, since the others had not yet entered? Everyone knows where that would lead us. Or should we consult all the provinces? This might bring about rather amusing results. On this point, I should like to quote what was said by the member for St. Maurice-Lafleche (Mr. Hamel), on June 26, 1946, during the debate on redistribution. An amendment which was almost identical to the one now under consideration was then before the house. Submitted by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker), it was worded as follows:

Be it resolved that the government be required to consult at once the several provinces and upon satisfactory conclusion of such consultations be authorized to present an humble address . . .

It almost seems as though the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) framed his amendment in the exact terms used in 1946 by the hon. member for Lake Centre. The member for St. Maurice-Lafleche continued:

If it is accepted, the dominion government will have to enter into consultations with the provinces. This gives rise to countless difficulties that are well-nigh insoluble in the present state of our legislation. In what manner will such consultations with the

provinces be carried out? Will the provincial prime ministers themselves be asked to express the desire of their respective legislatures, or will the latter be called upon, in a regular or special session, to express their views through a resolution? No one has told us and the matter has not been provided for.

Indeed, there is absolutely nothing in the constitution to this effect and the hon. members opposite have found no such provision. The hon. member for St. Maurice-Lafleche continues:

However, let us suppose that an appropriate method of consultation is agreed upon. The problem will then in no way be solved. For the amendment continues: "and upon satisfactory conclusion of such consultations." Who will decide whether the result is satisfactory or not, and on what basis will a decision be reached in that connection? Those are two more questions that remain unanswered. To my mind, it is obvious that the proposed redistribution will abolish certain unjustified privileges as regards representation in the House of Commons.

The hon. member was referring here to redistribution.

As I was saying, this has been shown conclusively and rather amusingly by the minister of external affairs (Mr. Pearson), and we are now told that the consent of the provinces is necessary.

This afternoon, the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay (Mr. Dorion) said that the premier of Quebec had protested in that regard.

If I am not mistaken, the premier of Quebec, Mr. Duplessis, has merely said that they had not been courteous enough to consult him. He did not claim a right, he simply wanted courtesy, and we all know to what extent Mr. Duplessis is versed in matters of courtesy.

I shall now deal with the assertion which the hon. member for Beauharnois-Laprairie (Mr. Raymond) made this afternoon about the cost which the admission of Newfoundland into the confederation is going to entail.

Of course, it will cost something, but I find it strange that the very same people who, on the occasion of the privy council's award, gave part of Labrador to Newfoundland, protested at that time because immeasurable wealth which was included within the territory of Quebec had been made part of Newfoundland's territory.

Those people are the very same who today feel that the boundless and immeasurable wealth which then existed is not worth the price they are being asked to pay.