

December 1, 1947

Mr. Smallwood I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask His Excellency the Governor in Commission to ask the Government of Canada to state whether, in the event of union and the consequent operation of the Newfoundland railway and steamship system by Canada, it would be the policy of the Government of Canada to continue in their employment all the employees of the system at the time of union, with the rights and privileges with respect to continuity of employment that are accorded to employees of the Canadian National Railways.

Mr. Cashin Mr. Chairman, I should like to bring to the attention of the delegates and to the country an article which appeared in a local newspaper on Saturday last, November 29. It reads as follows and is captioned:

*Duplessis is to Challenge Decision
by Privy Council*

Quebec, November 29: Formal notice has been served upon Ottawa, Newfoundland and the Privy Council that this province apparently does not consider that the judgment rendered by the Council about twenty years ago, taking part of Labrador away from Quebec and awarding it to Newfoundland, constitutes a final settlement of this highly controversial issue. Quebec's newsy premier, Hon. Maurice Duplessis revealed this at a press conference yesterday afternoon, when he referred to the mineral possibilities and probabilities of Ungava, or New Quebec, much of which is located in Labrador.

"This great mineral wealth uncovered is particularly important, and we are pleased to say that two-thirds of this vast territory incontestably is located in the Province of Quebec," said Mr. Duplessis, who then went on to make an unusually important statement, when he declared that "One-third is a territory upon which we consider that we have rights."

He referred to this one-third in question at another point as "One third which was attributed by a judgment of the Privy Council and by the present federal government to the colony of Newfoundland." The whole matter came up when the premier told reporters that he had just received a visit from J. I. Rankin,

the managing director of N.A. Timmins, Regd., the Timmins Interests, and those controlling the Hollinger North Shore Exploration Co. Ltd., which firm is doing the mineral exploration and exploitation work in Ungava. Mr. Duplessis goes on, "The first reports of the work which I have just received indicate that tons of unsurpassable mineral wealth was found and this is only the result of the investigation which relatively speaking was a most incomplete one...."

Asked exactly what minerals had been uncovered, the premier replied, "Vast quantities of mineral ore, iron most definitely and I think gold and possibly other minerals too. I did not get detailed information to any extent." He goes on, "The results to date are all the more remarkable and the future possibilities and probabilities extraordinary", he pointed out, "when it is considered that the Hollinger interests are working only a portion of a section of 1,500 square miles out of the entire New Quebec or Ungava Territory, which has an area of more than 311,000 square miles."

Mr. Duplessis recalled that all this vast and exceptionally rich territory of more than 300,000 square miles had remained absolutely unproductive until the National Union assumed office for a second time in 1944....

He terminated his statement by reiterating, "Quebec intends remaining the mistress in her own home and running her own affairs, and with the vast industrial expansion which this province definitely established, you can see how important it is to this province in particular but to Canada as a whole also, that we remain masters in our own house and continue to administer our own affairs."

I cannot say what my fellow delegates may think of this, but to me it seems a most extraordinary statement for the Prime Minister of Quebec to make. Goodness knows, this whole Convention set-up is bewildering enough. The political fog in which our people are enshrouded today is dense enough, without adding to our confusion by the injection of this sort of thing. At the very beginning of these so-called terms from Ottawa, as contained in the Grey Book, we find in section 2 the following: "The province of Newfoundland