

for asking for an interruption than it has had on any other occasion I can remember. When we first saw the request made by the government we felt, particularly in view of the experience of last year, that we should hesitate and consider carefully whether we should consent to such an interruption. From time to time, however, it is necessary that those of us who are in opposition should view matters of government convenience, particularly when they involve courtesy to another parliament, in a broad way. I repeat that we have decided to support this amended resolution.

I would remind hon. members that many weeks ago, in the autumn, we asked that parliament be called to deal with matters of urgency, and of course this has become one of the matters that could have been dealt with had parliament been called before Christmas or earlier this month. This is the criticism I make of the government at the moment—that the session should have been called earlier. But it was not called earlier, and we are now faced with the necessity of giving consideration to union with Newfoundland. After all, this is a most important event in the history of this country—the addition of a new province, something which was contemplated by the fathers of confederation as long ago as 1867 and, in relation to what will be the tenth province, is about to be consummated in 1949.

I say again that we dislike interruptions to the debate on the address. We believe that this interruption could have been avoided by calling parliament earlier. But since parliament was not called, since the union of Newfoundland with Canada is an important matter which should be dealt with, and since we should give the British parliament ample time in which to deal with it and to plan its work, we will support the amended resolution.

**Mr. Roland Beaudry (St. James):** Following the words of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart I should like to ask the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Drew) if he suggested earlier that parliament should have been convened sooner, for instance at a time when it was impossible for the leader of the opposition to have a seat in this house?

**Mr. Graydon:** The hon. member did not make history with that remark.

**Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the explanation of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), and to the arguments advanced by the leader of the C.C.F. (Mr. Coldwell). I agree with the hon. member that everything should be done to enable consideration at the earliest possible day of the resolution with regard to the admission of Newfoundland into confederation.

With him I agree also that that event will represent a step forward in the completion of the destiny of this dominion. In that regard I am in agreement with him; but he failed to answer the argument advanced, and the government has as yet not answered the argument of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew), that first and foremost the government of this country must have the confidence of the House of Commons.

This resolution carries out an old plan; there is nothing new about it. Parliament could have been called three weeks ago, if not before, and this matter could have been determined.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I cannot hear the interruptions, so I shall not say anything in reply. It was most interesting to hear the interrupters on the other side of the house when my leader said that the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne might be determined within a week. They ridiculed that statement; they jeered.

**An hon. Member:** Certainly they did.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** My hon. friend the leader of the C.C.F. says that it will take anywhere from three to six weeks to complete that debate. Having regard to the fact that an election is not too far away, I have no doubt that this debate will take a considerable time. If so, the responsibility rests upon the Prime Minister for failing to call parliament together early enough to have this matter determined.

**Mr. McIlraith:** Even without a leader of the opposition?

**Mr. Graydon:** You will get plenty of him before you are through.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** During the days of the war we in the opposition co-operated with the government at all times.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**An hon. Member:** Explain.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** In relation to anything having to do with our war effort, the words of the hon. member for Carleton were to that effect. During the war there were invasions of the rights of a free parliament, but we of the opposition intend to be assured that they shall not be continued in the days of peace. More than anything else the people of this country are asking that parliament be restored to the prestige that it enjoyed in the years prior to the war. They are asking that parliament shall not continue in living stagnation while government by bureaucracy continues in this country. They are asking to have restored the right of the people's representatives