

*Newfoundland*

have the same right to make recommendations to the British government as the convention itself, and there had been no undertaking by the British government that it would accept any or all of the recommendations of the convention, or that it would accept these recommendations to the exclusion of anything else.

Within one week after the announcement of the result of the voting in the national convention, 50,000 people of Newfoundland either had sent telegrams or had written to the governor expressing their wish and their demand that, in spite of any decision reached by the convention, the choice of confederation with Canada be given to the people of Newfoundland by its inclusion on the ballot which was to be presented to them in the referendum. In other words, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the sixteen elected members of the convention who individually and as a group recommended to the British government the inclusion of confederation with Canada on the ballot, 50,000 citizens of Newfoundland made known their wishes in like manner to the British government in an unmistakable way. As a result of all this, the British government reached its decision to have on the ballot, which was presented to the people of Newfoundland in the referendum, the three choices—return of responsible government, retention of commission of government, and confederation with Canada.

The suggestion has been made that there was some defect in this procedure; that it was not democratic; that it was not a free choice, and that in some way the people of Newfoundland were misled. I should like to quote the words used by the Prime Minister of Great Britain when he announced the British policy to the British House of Commons on December 11, 1945. He said:

The object of the procedure which His Majesty's government proposes is to enable the people of the island to come to a free and informed decision as to their future form of government.

The suggestion has been left in many minds that the choice of the people of Newfoundland was neither free nor informed. I say that that is entirely incorrect. Their choice was a free one, and it was one which they had known they were to make, from December 1945, through the whole period during which the convention sat, and right down to the referendum.

I believe many thousands of Newfoundlanders who voted against confederation will resent the suggestion that they have been imposed upon; that there was anything undemocratic or improper in the way in which they were permitted to make their choice.

[Mr. Dickey.]

The people of Newfoundland will little appreciate any technicalities of interpretation of the British North America Act or problems of the Canadian constitution. Newfoundlanders who know the facts will realize that the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) in this house, and those who adopt his arguments, have adopted the arguments and taken over the position of those in Newfoundland who most violently oppose union of the colony of Newfoundland with Canada.

In the last few days in this house much has been said in praise of the people of Newfoundland, and of the strength of the bonds which unite that people with the people of this country. Nowhere in this dominion are these bonds stronger than they are in Nova Scotia, the province from which I come. We have a special knowledge of the people of Newfoundland. Thousands of them live among us. We have a closer community of interest with the people of Newfoundland than the people of any other portion of Canada, largely because of the basic importance to both of us of the great industry of fishing. It has also been said that to know the people of Newfoundland is to appreciate them. To know them better is to appreciate them more. We have had the privilege of knowing them best, and we appreciate them most.

Therefore it is with a particular feeling of pride that the people of Nova Scotia welcome the people of Newfoundland as full partners in this confederation. We feel that they have been given the opportunity to make a free choice, and we are not disposed to take any technical or synthetic position which will prevent the union which both Newfoundland and Canada desire.

**Mr. J. G. L. Langlois (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to take part in this debate until I heard the speech made a few minutes ago by the hon. member for Beauharnois-Laprairie (Mr. Raymond). Since part of my address will deal with his remarks, I think it proper that I should make them in the French language.

(Translation):

Mr. Speaker, I listened with much interest and quite attentively to the speech which the hon. member for Beauharnois-Laprairie (Mr. Raymond) has just delivered.

Among the remarks which he saw fit to make in this debate, there was one, if my memory serves me aright, where the hon. member said: "We Canadians from Quebec want first of all to protect the interests of Canada." I must say that all members who come from the province of Quebec agree with the full scope of that remark of the hon. member. We also are concerned with the