

Newfoundland

Dominion Elections Act to Newfoundland as it applies to other parts of Canada? This article certainly suggests on the face of it much more than what I contend is in the elections act, by way of vesting powers in the chief electoral officer.

Mr. St. Laurent: An attempt was made in drafting these terms to satisfy the delegation from Newfoundland, one which in its composition comprised some very distinguished lawyers. In the group there were the law officers of the Canadian government, and the law officers the delegation from Newfoundland brought with them. They suggested it would be advisable to have this provision in there to take care of such differences as conditions might present. And the recommendation made by the law officers accompanying the Newfoundland delegation and those accompanying the Canadian delegation were thought to be unobjectionable, with the result that the clause was inserted. One of the law officers acting for the Newfoundland delegation was the dean of the law school of Dalhousie university. They considered all these matters in detail and made their recommendations. They appeared to the two delegations to be unobjectionable, and were inserted.

Mr. Timmins: My recollection is that last year when the previous prime minister was speaking to the house, and we were talking on the matter of Senate reform, he informed the house that in respect of later appointments he had made to the Senate there were certain conditions attached—that he had spoken to members to be appointed, and had suggested to them some conditions, and that he would expect them to respect any change or reform that might be made in the Senate, if any reforms or changes were to be made. I say, if there are changes or reforms to be made.

I am sure the Prime Minister is not unmindful, and has knowledge, of what those recommendations or commitments were when they were made, and I should like to have him tell the house whether that same policy is to be followed in the future in making appointments to the Senate from Newfoundland or whether the matter was given any consideration when the discussions took place.

Mr. St. Laurent: The matter was given no consideration when the discussions took place. With respect to conditions imposed upon appointees to the Senate, I must say to the hon. member that I have no knowledge of any having been imposed.

Mr. Rowe: You should have had a caucus before you took office.

Mr. St. Laurent: When my hon. friend sits in my place he may tell the house how things should be done, but in the meantime I am deciding that.

Mr. Rowe: I hope I know more of what my predecessor did than my hon. friend.

Mr. Drew: In view of the caustic nature of some of the remarks of the Prime Minister, may I say that he is not going to decide; this house is going to decide.

Mr. St. Laurent: This house has never in the past, and I hope it will never in the future, decide when, where or why party caucuses should be held.

Mr. Drew: I am not talking about party caucuses.

Mr. St. Laurent: That is the matter the hon. member was referring to.

Mr. Rowe: You may not need any more caucuses; one or two more will be about all you will need.

Mr. Green: May I ask the Prime Minister a question. On the same date that the terms were signed certain statements were given to the Newfoundland delegation some of which seemed to tie in with sections of the terms of union. Can the Prime Minister tell us whether there are to be subsequent agreements between Canada and Newfoundland with regard to some of the questions contained in the statements, or just what is to be done? For example, there is one statement having to do with elections and changes in electoral divisions. Are there to be further agreements dealing with some of these items that were raised by the Newfoundland delegation?

Mr. St. Laurent: I know of no further agreements. These statements were in respect of matters which it was felt were not proper to have put into the terms of union which would become the constitution of the new province. We were constantly being told by members of the Newfoundland delegation: Our understanding is such and so. I told them that I did not want them to understand anything that was not going to be brought before the houses of parliament when the terms of union were being confirmed, that everything that they felt had influenced their attitude should be put in the form of statements that could be given to the houses of parliament. We could then assert to the houses of parliament that all that was being undertaken in the form of constitutional obligations was in the terms of union; that in discussing the terms of union we had declared what would be the policy of this government but that that would not bind anyone but ourselves. Nevertheless we felt that it would be unfair