

*Newfoundland*

instance, I should like to reaffirm the fact, which I think is beyond contradiction, that if this address is accepted and passed by this parliament not one line of the British North America Act will have been changed thereby. Nor do I think it necessary to deal at great length with the loud and vehement protestations, which were made last evening and this afternoon on the other side of the house, of undying devotion to principle and consistency. I think that was very effectively dealt with last night by hon. members on this side of the house and on the other side. It was pointed out that while some of the speakers of the official opposition dealt at length with the date 1925 and with the date 1946, they forgot the date 1943.

It has been said in criticism of the government that the procedure laid down in section 146 of the British North America Act is not being followed on this occasion. The government is being criticized for not following that procedure, and therefore I suggest, Mr. Speaker, we are entitled to draw from that criticism the conclusion that those who take that view would have followed the procedure laid down in that section.

As has been pointed out before, and I apologize for repeating it, that section provides, with respect to Newfoundland, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, that they may be admitted by the Queen. I quote:

By and with the advice of Her Majesty's most honourable privy council.

That means the privy council of the United Kingdom; that is, by the action of United Kingdom ministers, not Canadian ministers. That procedure has not been followed for many years and, I suggest, will not be followed at any time in the future. Canada long since has made it impossible for any act affecting herself to be taken by the United Kingdom government except on advice received from Canada; and that of course is the way we wish it to be.

It was also pointed out last evening by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) that section 146 of the British North America Act contemplated that Newfoundland would join the dominion only in accordance with the procedure set forth in that section. I am sure he is too good a lawyer—and I am not a lawyer at all—to believe that that is the proper interpretation to give to that section, which is not mandatory, not exclusive, but merely permissive in character. By its wording, that section does not exclude other methods of bringing Newfoundland into confederation. The reason why certain other methods have to be adopted on this occasion is not a Canadian reason. It is

[Mr. Pearson.]

a reason which originated in the circumstances which are present in Newfoundland today.

However, I do not really think that those who have spoken in favour of the amendment can make very much out of the legal and constitutional argument. That does not mean—and this is why I feel it necessary to say a few words on this subject today—that if we vote against this amendment on this side, and on the other side of the house, we shall not be accused of being conspirators against the constitution, wreckers of provincial rights, centralists and all that kind of thing. That is the penalty we have to pay when we talk about a strong central federal Canadian government in the interests of Canadian unity and Canadian nationhood.

In the country today, and I am not referring to anything that has been said in this debate, there is I suggest a tendency, a very dangerous tendency in my view, to stir up the feeling that the provinces and the dominion are somehow and in some way hostile to each other; that the people of Canada as represented in this parliament are in some way different from the people of Canada as represented in the provincial parliaments; that there is, for instance, some inevitable conflict between my duty and loyalty as a resident of this province and my duty and loyalty as a Canadian. I suggest that there is great danger to national development in that trend and in that sort of talk. In this connection I should like to quote some very wise words which were uttered by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) in 1941, when he said:

The time has come to start thinking as Canadians. Those who deliberately seek to arouse province against province, race against race are disloyal to Canada . . .

I am sure that there is no one in this house who will object to that sentiment or who will have anything but praise for it.

All Canadians are represented in this house; all Canadians have spokesmen in this house on all issues that come within the federal jurisdiction, as indeed this particular issue does. In connection with this matter they do not have to be represented in the legislature of Alberta or of Nova Scotia or of any other province. If any considerable section of the people of Canada object to what is being done in this parliament of Canada, on this issue of Newfoundland, they have an opportunity to express that objection through their representatives. The fact that there has been so little objection to the course that has been taken shows I am sure that the feeling of the country is almost unanimous in this important matter.

The discussion yesterday and today has ranged pretty far and wide over this general constitutional issue, over the whole ques-