

Newfoundland

saying I know of the difficulties in abolishing the Senate, in its present form in any event, and the difficulties in reforming an institution which has far more power today than the British House of Lords, whose powers were shorn by the Parliament Act of 1911, and are about to be shorn still further in the interests of democratic procedure. We have an archaic institution which, as I say, brings this whole parliament, Commons and Senate, into disrepute.

I intended this afternoon to deal to some extent with other aspects of our constitution, but I am not going to do so. I will change what I intended to say and more or less let rest what I have already said. I feel that, at the moment, the challenge this amendment places before the house is indeed grave. It is a grave challenge to the rights of this parliament under the British North America Act. It is a grave challenge to the constitutional procedures that have hitherto been adopted in this country. If we agree that, in a matter of this description which does not touch the provinces except as component parts of this dominion, we are going to say that one province perchance may say no or the majority of the provinces perchance may say no, or two-thirds of the provinces perchance may say yes and one-third say no, then we are placing our constitutional procedure in this country in a state of chaos. For who then shall make the decision? I do not propose, Mr. Speaker, to take any part in bringing about chaos in this country at a time when chaos is dangerous for freedom and democracy in many parts of the world.

I want to see our procedures properly carried out. I want to see this democratic institution operate in a democratic manner. I want to preserve it. In 1936, I remember, my hon. friend the leader of the opposition sang a different song from the one he now sings. He then said that we in this country were in grave danger, and he pointed out that there was a growing fascism in the province of Quebec. Having read that, I presumed the growing fascism in Quebec at that time was the election of Mr. Duplessis as premier of that province, with the padlock law and the kind of labour code about which we have been hearing recently. So then, Mr. Speaker, so far as I personally am concerned—I have not been able to consult my friends but I rather expect I speak for them in this regard—I shall oppose the amendment and support the resolution for the address to His Majesty.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we have now reached the final stage, so far as this house is concerned, in the process of bringing into confederation the new province of Newfoundland. At this time, I

[Mr. Coldwell.]

do not intend to launch upon any extended expression of ecstasy over the high qualities of the people of Newfoundland or of their country, because I have already placed on the record how this group regards the people of that country. We are very happy that Newfoundland has expressed, in the only way it had at its disposal, a desire to join with us in confederation. We want to bring them in on terms that are satisfactory and that will leave no room for unhappiness at any time in the future.

I must confess, Mr. Speaker, that, as I listened to the arguments presented by the leader of the opposition this afternoon, I was much moved because I found that those arguments were exactly the arguments that this group has been using in this house ever since we came here. If you look back through *Hansard*, you will find at least twenty-five different speeches, if not more, given by members of this group expressing views almost identical with those stated by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition this afternoon. Now, whatever the past sins of the leader of the opposition may be, I must say that in respect to his concern over the constitution and the rights and privileges of the provinces of this great dominion, he is now back on the right track. I will challenge anyone to look back over any statements we have made, on the hustings, in this house or anywhere else, that will give the lie to what I have just now been saying about our position.

I regarded as completely specious the arguments made by the leader of the C.C.F. party this afternoon concerning the case put by the leader of the opposition. In this house, at this time, we are not concerned over what Newfoundland does, but the provinces of Canada are certainly concerned about the kind of bedfellows they have. I do not say that in any derogatory sense. Surely the provinces who occupy the bed should have something to say about any other bedfellows who wish to come in. The provinces of Canada already occupy the Canadian bed. We contend that those Canadian provinces, since they will be very vitally affected by anything that is done about sharing the bed, should be consulted.

I do not think this position is any grave challenge to our constitution at all, as was contended by the leader of the C.C.F. If we have been following a certain procedure over the years and that procedure has been wrong, then certainly there is no justification for continuing to follow it merely because we followed it in the past. So far as I can see, the argument presented by the leader of the C.C.F. is the typical argument that a centralizer would advance. We are not centralizers. We have always been and shall always