

Mr. Smallwood Mr. Chairman, I move the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the National Convention desires to recommend to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that the following form of government be placed before the people of Newfoundland in the forthcoming national referendum, namely confederation with Canada upon the basis submitted to the National Convention on November 6, 1947, by the Prime Minister of Canada.

If ever I had deep respect for the statesmanship of Great Britain it is now as I stand to move this resolution, that we recommend confederation to be submitted to the Newfoundland people in the forthcoming referendum. My respect for the statesmanship of Great Britain is boundless. Just consider, sir, what the British government could have done. They decided to allow the Newfoundland people themselves to decide what form of government they would have for their country, and they decided to hold a referendum for that purpose. But they decided at the same time to ask the Newfoundland people to elect a National Convention to make recommendations as to what forms of government should be submitted to the people in that referendum. The British government could have arranged to leave it completely to this Convention as to what forms of government the people would vote on in the referendum. If they had done that, then whatever a majority of the members here recommended would go on the ballot paper, and nothing else. The British government could have done that. They could have left it to a majority of the delegates of this Convention to decide what forms of government would be put before the people. In that case we know now what would have been recommended — responsible government would have been recommended and nothing else, for as the whole country knows, the majority of the delegates here are in favour of responsible government and nothing else. If the majority had their way our people would not be allowed to vote for anything but responsible government. Thank God this was not done. It is not up to a majority of this Convention to decide what our people shall vote on in the referendum this spring. The British government could have

arranged it that way, but they did not. Thank God. The British government knew very well why. They know very well that a majority of members here in the Convention might represent a minority of the people. They knew that a minority here might well represent a great majority of the population of the country, so the British government very wisely kept to themselves the right to decide what should go on the ballot and what should not. In this way the democratic rights of the Newfoundland people have been preserved against usurpation, and I am very grateful to the British government for doing it.

So I say to our Newfoundland people, I say to the many thousands of Newfoundlanders who want confederation with Canada, and I say to the members of this Convention, that although the confederates in the Convention are outnumbered almost two to one, although we are a minority in the Convention, our recommendation will be respected by the British government. There is no doubt about, confederation will be on the ballot paper in the referendum. Our people will get their chance to vote for confederation this spring. The many hundreds of people who have written or telegraphed or telephoned about this matter to me, can be of good cheer, for the British government will protect the democratic rights of our people against all attempts of a mere majority of this Convention.

Well, the first stage of our great battle for the people is nearly over. It was a battle to get this Convention to adopt my resolution to send a delegation to Canada to get the terms, but that battle was finally won. It was a battle to get this Convention to debate the terms, but that battle was won. Now we are entering the last stage of the first half of the battle. We are going to decide whether, as a Convention, we will recommend that confederation be put before the people in the referendum for their verdict. We may not get a complete victory in this present part of the battle. A majority of the members here will probably vote against my motion, but by this time the British government has a very good idea of how things stand in this country today. They are not going to be carried away by a vote of a mere majority of this Convention, because they know that 99 Newfoundlanders out of 100 want confederation to be submitted to them after this Con-