

The Secretary of
The National Convention.

Question: I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask His Excellency the Governor in Commission to ascertain from the United Kingdom government the latest date on which the recommendations of this Convention must be submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in order to ensure the holding of a referendum in the spring of 1948.

In the event of the majority of the voters in the forthcoming referendum favouring a form of government other than Commission of Government, at what time and by what method will the change to the new form of government become effective?

Answer: January 8, 1948.

Dear Sir:

I have to refer to the question asked by a member of the National Convention as to the latest date on which the recommendations of the Convention must be submitted to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in order to ensure the holding of a referendum in the spring of 1948.

The Right Honourable the Secretary of State has already informed the Commission of Government that a period of at least one month will be required for the consideration of the recommendations of the Convention.

The Commission of Government have given consideration to the question of setting a date for the holding of the national referendum and I have been directed to communicate their views to the National Convention.

It is hoped that it will be possible to hold the referendum about the end of the month of May this year. It is impracticable to hold a poll during the period from early June to late September as so many people are away from their homes and may be disfranchised. Final arrangements cannot be made for holding the referendum until the necessary legislation has been passed and steps in this direction cannot be taken until a decision has been made as to the questions to be submitted to the people.

Members of the Convention familiar with the difficulties of travel during the spring

months in sections of Newfoundland and in Labrador will realise that ample time must be allowed for the distribution of ballot papers and other materials for all polling booths. The matters preliminary to the voting will take place in the following order — delivery of recommendations by the National Convention, consideration by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, communication of decision as to forms of government to be submitted to the people, final draft and publication of legislation for comment, passing of legislation, printing of ballots and other forms, setting up of polling stations and distribution of election material.

In order to permit sufficient time to complete the necessary arrangements and to ensure to all qualified electors of Newfoundland and Labrador the opportunity of voting, it will be necessary, if the referendum is to be held during the month of May, to have the recommendations of the Convention submitted at an early date. The Commission are unable to give any assurance that the referendum will be possible this spring if the recommendations of the Convention are not received by the end of the present month.

Yours faithfully,
W.J. Carew
Secretary.

The Secretary of
The National Convention.

January 8, 1948.

Dear Sir:

Consideration has been given to the question asked by a member of the National Convention concerning the time and method by which a form of government other than Commission of Government, if selected by a majority of the voters at the referendum, would become effective.

I am directed to say that the question relates to matters not included in the duty and function of the National Convention as set forth in the legislation constituting that body. I am to assure the Convention, however, that, if the people voting at the referendum select a form of government different from the present form, the necessary arrangements will be made to give effect at the earliest possible date to the decision of the people.