

*Newfoundland*

way of proceeding does not at all conflict with the stand taken in the past by our government with regard to this matter.

I know that some are ready to rise in their place and say yes. They say that today, but they have not always been of that opinion. Nothing in that attitude, in those suggestions, come in any way in conflict with the position taken up to now by the central administration. The dominion government thought it was taking the right course in initiating the move and absorbing the costs of research undertaken by the Rowell-Sirois commission with a view to finding a suitable basis for the settlement of our fiscal problems. The information obtained was intended for the provinces as well as for the central administration and would be made available to both parties to the negotiations. The central power having informed the provinces of its views on procedure, the provinces refused to co-operate. As a consequence, I repeat that the conference was a total failure, and I believe that I have proven my point.

Today the dominion government tells the provinces: "Very well, you contend that we were wrong in acting as we did and in taking the first steps, so go ahead and suggest a better way; tell us, in short, what you wish, and once you have made your wishes known we shall be prepared to discuss with you, on even terms, the findings of these preliminary conferences."

May I repeat that, to my mind, this suggestion reduces to a minimum the possible recurrence of the sometimes disgraceful performances which marked interprovincial conferences in the past. I submit it in all good faith to the consideration of the house and of the government I have the honour of supporting, though I am prepared to modify my views if they should be proved wrong. I say merely that I do not see how we can possibly go wrong if we follow the procedure that governed the pre-confederation conferences which led to the drafting of the federal statute. Through this legislation which set up a central administration and united the Canadian provinces, Canada became the great nation we are now proud to call our own.

I feel there should be no fear to suggest to the provincial premiers that they take a leaf out of the book of the fathers of confederation.

It is all very well for people to claim time and time again that they wish to abide by the

[Mr. Langlois.]

spirit and letter of confederation, that they insist on modeling their attitude on that of the men who drafted the confederation agreement. All this, however, would sound much more convincing to the Canadian public if, instead of only repeating that we wish to emulate these great statesmen, we gave concrete evidence that we actually intend to follow in their footsteps and that, as I said earlier, we want to further the development of this great Canadian nation which they pioneered.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(Text):

**Mr. W. Garfield Case (Grey North):** It appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that a fine legal argument has taken place and we, as laymen, must seek to understand the various arguments presented by the learned gentlemen who have spoken during the past few hours. By seeking to interpret what I have learned from the arguments advanced, particularly as they relate to the amendment moved by my own leader, I feel that I might contribute something.

At the outset, may I say there is no one within the hearing of my voice more anxious to see Newfoundland admitted into confederation with Canada than I am. I hope I have an appreciation of my country and, for many long years, I have visualized the advantages we, as a nation, would enjoy if Newfoundland were admitted into confederation. I submit, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in the amendment moved by the leader of the opposition that would in any way handicap the completion of this union. I have listened to the hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson), and while I would hesitate to interpret any part of the law expounded by him, I was impressed with his reference to municipal law and to municipal procedure.

I have had some experience in municipal government. I might say to the hon. gentleman that the municipalities in the province of Ontario, while governed to an extent by the statutes drafted by the department of municipal affairs, have a set of bylaws for which those municipalities are responsible. Over the years those bylaws have accumulated in number. I think it would be a tremendous task for the law officer of a municipality to search those bylaws in order to determine whether something already in effect might react against a matter being passed by the municipal council. For this reason we do