

Newfoundland

expressed a dissenting voice on the second reading of the bill. The hon. member for Chicoutimi (Mr. Gagnon) has likewise expressed his disapproval, but on the third reading of the bill. As for the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay (Mr. Dorion) and myself, we have made it clear, on the committee stage, that we were opposed to this union as proposed.

So that there will be no misunderstanding, I take advantage of this resolution, and of the amendment proposed by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew), to repeat my opposition.

First, as I have already shown and proven during the discussion in committee, the procedure followed by the government is a violation of the constitution. Moreover, if we approve this stand of the government we shall be party to an injustice and to the violation of an undertaking between Great Britain and Newfoundland. I for one want to disengage myself from any responsibility for it.

The leader of the opposition has moved that the different provincial governments be consulted and the union proceeded with after securing satisfactory results from such consultation.

I wish to state that I am not entirely satisfied with this amendment; yet, for want of something better, I shall vote for it. At least it embodies the principle that the provinces should not be entirely ignored in connection with amendments to the pact of 1867. I hold, however, as I did last Tuesday, that not only should the government consult the different provinces which were parties to the pact, but should obtain their consent to any amendment of the constitution. Many reasons justify our securing the consent of the provinces, especially of those which pay the cost of such union.

The Prime Minister has stated that the members elected to the federal parliament from the different provinces represent their respective provinces in such cases as this. I do not share his views, but since he holds that opinion and has the support of a majority in this house, I shall, as one of the representatives of the province of Quebec, state certain reasons for which our province would be justified in opposing that union.

In the second place, the union will entail a considerable increase in our already too heavy burdens. The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has already admitted that, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) proved it in the statement he made the other day. Some economists are unanimous in the belief that we are assuming heavy liabilities. And who is going to pay in the long run? The provinces of Quebec and Ontario, in which the main sources of revenue are to be found.

I wish to quote from a Reuters dispatch, published by the newspaper *Le Droit* on February 9 last, the following statement from Lord Jowitt:

The Canadian proposals in connection with the incorporation of Newfoundland "are not devoid of generosity" according to the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Jowitt.

It can be taken for granted that for many years the annexation is going to be quite a heavy burden for the Canadian people, began Lord Jowitt.

We, in this country, have never sought to gain anything from Newfoundland, while Canada certainly pays a high price in her effort to put that former colony back on her feet.

Lord Jowitt states that he discussed with a great many people this matter of Newfoundland's entry into confederation and the consensus of opinion is that it was a very good thing for Great Britain, since the Canadian people seem ready to accept this "heavy responsibility."

One has but to analyse the methods used by the commission of government appointed by London to come to the conclusion that Great Britain is more anxious than anyone else to bring about this union. And Canada, ever generous towards Great Britain, has hastened to comply with the latter's wishes.

In the third place, I further object because the union compels us to increase our defence budget. According to statements which have already been made, our expenditures for national defence will be greatly increased this year. If we take into consideration the fact that Canada, with a population of only twelve and a half million people has just as much territory to protect as the United States whose population is now 150 million, we should not think of increasing our present territory. There will result increased expenditures which again will fall, to a large extent, on the Quebec taxpayer, who is already overtaxed. We would imitate the frog who tried to swell itself up to the size of an ox. We are heading for a blow-out.

In the fourth place, that union will drag us into international conflict. We shall be getting a mortgaged property on which the imperial commission has already leased bases to the United States for 99 years. Therefore, should the United States be at war with another nation, we immediately become subject to attack. The presence of those foreign air bases on our territory will involve us in war, whether we want it or not.

In the fifth place, the union will imperil Canadian unity. It will cause problems on account of the pronounced dissensions amongst the people of Newfoundland themselves and on account of their imperialist tendencies. We are contracting a marriage imposed on us by a foreign commission established in London, and this imperial commission is evidently acting in its own interest, judging from its efforts to achieve that union.