

the second vote, which will be held on July 22, is to be on two questions only, responsible government and confederation. We have maintained and are maintaining the attitude that, after having made what we consider is a fair offer, it is exclusively the right of the people of Newfoundland to express their acceptance or rejection of that offer. We have been most careful to avoid doing anything that either party might regard as an attempt to influence the votes of the inhabitants of Newfoundland.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: During the past couple of days I have received a number of representations from Newfoundland in regard to the question to which the minister has just referred. I should like to refer to these and then ask a question. The first representation is in the form of a telegram which was sent to the Hon. the Secretary of State for Commercial Relations in London, and reads:

The undersigned members of the bar of Newfoundland are of the considered opinion and firmly maintain that the address to His Majesty by the Newfoundland legislature and the Newfoundland Act of 1933 enacted by the British parliament provided specifically that Newfoundland's constitution would be merely suspended and would be restored to the people at their request when the country again became self-supporting. As the national convention has decided that Newfoundland is self-supporting, therefore only two forms of government can be considered and submitted to the people in the referendum, namely, responsible government and commission government.

That was signed by what I am informed is a majority of the members of the bar there. Today I received a telegram which I should like to bring to the attention of the minister. This reads:

Forwarding information King stated Newfoundland should "indicate clearly and beyond all possibility of misunderstanding their will to become a province."

This telegram then asks if 50 per cent of total electorate or 70 per cent of vote cast would be considered sufficient on the part of the government of Canada to warrant their accepting Newfoundland's application to join the Dominion of Canada. At what point will the government consider that the Newfoundland authorities and the people as a whole desire to be included within the Canadian confederation?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: Mr. Chairman, I cannot say anything that would be binding in that regard. I do not think the government of Canada will attempt to examine the various representations that may be made to the commonwealth relations office or that may be made to others.

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

There was received from the Governor of Newfoundland a communication asking us to receive a delegation from the national convention and then submit such conditions as we would consider fair for the entry of Newfoundland into Canada. Those conditions were submitted. If the authorities recognized as speaking for Newfoundland report that the people of Newfoundland wish to join Canada on the conditions expressed in the proposals that were submitted, it will then, I think, be the responsibility of the government to bring to parliament a recommendation that those conditions be made available to Newfoundland, and it will be for the commission of government or the parliament of the United Kingdom under which that commission of government functions to complete the arrangements, which will in my view no doubt require legislation by the parliament of the United Kingdom and possibly also by the Canadian parliament.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: It would require legislation by the Canadian parliament to be consummated?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: It would require action by the Canadian parliament. I do not think this government or any other government would venture to consummate a thing of such magnitude without having it decided by the parliament of Canada. It will be the responsibility of the government to make a recommendation to parliament, and the government, of course, will have to accept responsibility for the acceptance or the rejection by parliament of its recommendation. But the government will not attempt to say that it could complete the union without the approbation of parliament.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Would the minister not say it would require an almost overwhelming vote of the people of Newfoundland in order to justify Newfoundland being joined to Canada?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: The degree to which the consent of the population of Newfoundland would require to be expressed would have to be appraised by those who are responsible at the present time for Newfoundland affairs. If the government of Newfoundland, having consulted the population, represented to us that the population wished confederation to be consummated I think we would not go behind that declaration to examine to what extent they were justified in making such a representation.

At the present time the constitution of Newfoundland is still suspended, and it is the parliament of the United Kingdom that has legislative jurisdiction over Newfoundland. It