

Newfoundland

you will accept my usual assurance it will not take very long. It seems to me that our whole difficulty may be summarized in the simple statement that, while great men brought about the passage of the British North America Act, they made no provision in that act for a method for revising our constitution. We therefore from time to time find ourselves in the difficulty which confronts this house today. From that day to this we have been obliged to rely on decisions made in the Supreme Court of Canada and in the privy council regarding matters of jurisdiction and amendment. So may I at once say that I agree—as I have always agreed—with what was stated in the radio speech made by the Prime Minister a short time ago, that we need a meeting of some kind to endeavour to find a way to amend the British North America Act; to find a legal method, which will be without difficulty and without cavil, of amending our constitution. But that has not happened as yet. From the speech made by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) I gather that it is something which he has in mind, but he said that he had no intention of bringing that idea forward in the present session of parliament.

Some legal questions are unanswered, and this house is entitled to expect to receive answers to them from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) who, after hearing the speech made by the hon. member for Souris (Mr. Ross) the other day, has maintained a most discreet silence in this house. As a matter of fact, I have not heard him guffaw in his usual manner from that time to this.

Mr. Abbott: Who? The hon. member for Souris?

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): The question in my mind, and upon which no one has touched, is this. Has Newfoundland a legislature, or has it not? In the broad sense of that word, I know they have no elected representatives. But I also know that, by the imperial act of 1933, I think it was, all the powers of a legislature were conferred upon the governing body. I am only a little police court lawyer. I realize that. I know nothing about constitutional matters.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, the interruption must have been intelligent. It was not from the hon. member for Springfield.

Mr. Sinnott: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here in my seat all evening, and have not spoken one word since I came in.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): May I agree with the hon. member for Springfield, Mr. Speaker, and go even further than he did. May I say that he has not said an intelligent word in this house since I came here four or five years ago.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Abbott: The hon. member for Calgary West may regret that remark.

Mr. Sinnott: Again I rise to a question of privilege.

Mr. Abbott: Ignore it.

Mr. Sinnott: I do not think—

An hon. Member: You never did.

Mr. Sinnott: —that any hon. member of this house should speak to another in the manner adopted by the hon. member for Calgary West.

Mr. Abbott: Consider the source whence it came.

Mr. Sinnott: Yes, I consider the source from which it came.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I suggest that hon. members do not interrupt the hon. member who has the floor.

An hon. Member: He did not interrupt.

Mr. Speaker: May I suggest that the hon. member who has the floor should address himself to the Speaker.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): I accept your soft slap on the wrist, Mr. Speaker, because there is no one to whom I would pay greater attention that I would to you.

Mr. Grant: The hon. member is obliged to.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Perhaps one of the reasons for that is that I am obliged to do so. But, nevertheless, that is the situation. I now continue. I wish the sharp-shooters in the chamber would speak out so that I could hear them.

Mr. Abbott: Nobody said a word.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): I turn now for a moment to the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan (Mr. Coldwell), who told us that my leader had reversed himself between last week and this week. That was to be anticipated.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): When I went to school, there were no such things as "grades"; the term used then was "books". When some one expects an interruption from the fifth book, he gets one from the second book, as exemplified by the interruption I received