

*Newfoundland*

wealth prime ministers now assembled in conference in London from the responsible government league of Newfoundland". I am sure a great many members of parliament have received copies of this memorandum. It draws attention to the fact that, after the decision had been reached by the most democratic process that the people had had for many years, those who were in the minority used the publicly-owned radio there to get signatures to a petition and to get telegrams sent into the British government to the extent of some 50,000. On the other hand, the responsible government people point out that while they wanted to present their point of view in connection with appealing their case to the British parliament, they have been denied access to the radio, and that they have not been given the same advantages as have those who were supporting confederation. The charge was made in this brief that large sums of money came from outside Newfoundland to influence the voting in connection with these plebiscites. These are extremely serious charges, and I think that the people of Canada are entitled to information as to whether the charges are well founded or not. I think the Canadian government should profit by the experiences we had in Canada following the signing of confederation in 1867.

For years we have had regional problems in Canada as a result of the tactics used in bringing about confederation. If in connection with bringing about confederation between Newfoundland and Canada there have been practices which should not be approved, the people of Canada should have full particulars.

In summing up their grievances, the responsible government league mentioned that in 1876 letters patent were granted. These were suspended in 1934 on the recommendations of the royal commission of 1933, when a firm undertaking was given that this was a temporary arrangement and that eventually, when economic conditions improved, responsible government would be restored. I do not accuse the Canadian government of being guilty in connection with these grievances. But our representatives who were negotiating should have gone out of their way to see that this commitment was fulfilled if at all possible.

The British North America Act of 1867 sets out specifically that the people of Newfoundland have rights which should be respected. Section 146 of that act reads as follows:

It shall be lawful for the Queen, by and with the advice of Her Majesty's most honourable privy council, on addresses from the houses of the parliament of Canada, and from the houses of the respective legislatures of the colonies or provinces of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and British Col-

umbia, to admit those colonies or provinces or any of them, into the union, and on address from the houses of the parliament of Canada to admit Rupert's land and the northwestern territory.

It is clear to me that this important provision of the British North America Act is being disregarded in the negotiations which are taking place, because the people of Newfoundland have not been able to express themselves through a representative legislature, and those who have negotiated for them have not been elected by the people and are not responsible to them. As far as we are concerned, we should have been more anxious that this provision of the British North America Act should be given some attention by the British government and by the negotiating members of the representatives from Newfoundland.

In their representations the responsible government league point out that while a majority of 7,000 was secured in support of confederation, some members of the commission government ignored their obligations and duties by participating in this controversial question, and they pointed out, that when the people in Newfoundland did vote on the question, the terms that were proposed to them were later found to be unsatisfactory.

If the negotiations could have been carried on by the elected representatives of the people after they had full information on the problems that were being discussed we would not have had that dissatisfaction.

When I was in Newfoundland on December 20 my attention was drawn to a telegram which was posted in the post office in Grand Falls, a notice asking people to fill in their application forms for family allowances. I was later sent a form. At that time a great many people in Newfoundland were unwilling to accept the fact that Newfoundland was to be a part of Canada. They said to me: "By what authority are you Canadians coming into Newfoundland and distributing your propaganda?" A good deal was said about what family allowances were going to mean to Newfoundland, but while they were taking their case to the courts they thought it was quite unfair that Canadian family allowance forms should be circulated through the mail in Newfoundland, further aggravating the problem. I am aware of the justification for this conduct. We had given a commitment to make family allowances payable after March 31, but some consideration should have been given to the feelings of the 71,000 people who felt that circulating the family allowance forms and literature was disregarding their constitutional rights while they were trying to get the British government to reverse the decision or trying to carry their case to the highest possible tribunal.