

Newfoundland

motion was defeated in the national convention by a vote of 29 to 16.

Mr. MacNicol: What were the numbers for and against?

Mr. St. Laurent: Twenty-nine against and sixteen for the inclusion of that third alternative on the ballot to be submitted.

In newspaper reports it has been stated that following this decision, widely signed petitions were submitted to the governor asking that the third question be also included in the ballot to be submitted.

The government of the United Kingdom, which still had the final responsibility for the affairs of the island, decided that the question would be included as one of the three to be submitted to the electorate of the island. The secretary of state for commonwealth relations, in a dispatch to the governor of Newfoundland, said in part as follows:

The terms offered by the Canadian government represent . . . the result of long discussions with a body of Newfoundlanders who were elected to the convention, and the issues involved appear to have been sufficiently clarified to enable the people of Newfoundland to express an opinion as to whether confederation with Canada would commend itself to them. In these circumstances, and having regard to the number of members of the convention who supported the inclusion of confederation with Canada in the ballot paper, His Majesty's government—

That is, the government of the United Kingdom.

—have come to the conclusion that it would not be right that the people of Newfoundland should be deprived of an opportunity of considering the issue at the referendum . . .

This first referendum took place on June 3, 1948. Out of a total of 176,297 registered voters on the list, 155,777 votes were cast. For responsible government there were 69,400 votes cast, or 44.55 per cent; for confederation, 64,066 or 41.13 per cent; for the continuation of the commission government, 22,311 or 14.32 per cent. As there was no over-all majority, and as had been announced before the referendum took place, a second referendum was arranged to decide between the two forms which had received the larger number of votes, namely, the restoration of responsible government or confederation with Canada. The second referendum took place on July 22, 1948. At that time 6,000 fewer votes were cast than in the first referendum. The total number of votes cast at the second referendum was 149,657. Of this number, 71,334 or 47.66 per cent were for the restoration of responsible government and 78,323 or 52.34 per cent were for confederation with Canada, a majority for confederation with Canada of 6,989 or 4.68 per cent.

In this second referendum, confederation received a majority in eighteen out of the twenty-five electoral districts from which

members had formerly been elected to the legislature of Newfoundland. Following the announcement of the result of that vote, Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, then Prime Minister, stated that the result of the referendum was clear, and beyond all possibility of misunderstanding an expression of opinion of the people of Newfoundland for confederation, and that he believed the people of Canada would welcome the result. Mr. King went on to state further:

The Canadian government is now consulting with the governments of Newfoundland and the United Kingdom in the working out of appropriate constitutional procedure for implementing the decision taken by the people of Newfoundland. The government will also be glad to receive with the least possible delay authorized representatives of Newfoundland to negotiate the terms of union on the basis of my letter of October 29, 1947, to the governor of Newfoundland, and the documents transmitted with it. In these negotiations any special problems which may arise in connection with the entry of Newfoundland into confederation will, I am sure, receive most careful consideration. Before final action is taken, the government will recommend the resulting agreement to the parliament of Canada for approval.

Following that letter, the government of Newfoundland appointed a delegation to come to Ottawa to negotiate the final terms under which the entry of Newfoundland might be brought about. The delegation was headed by Hon. A. J. Walsh, K.C.—now Sir A. J. Walsh, K.C.—commissioner of justice and chairman of defence in the commission of government. The other members of the delegation were Mr. F. G. Bradley, K.C. and Mr. J. R. Smallwood who had been members of the first delegation and with them were Mr. Chesley A. Crosbie, Mr. Philip Gruchy, Mr. J. B. McEvoy, K.C. and Mr. Gordon A. Winter. Negotiations with this delegation were opened at Ottawa on October 6, 1948, and ended with the signing of terms of an agreement on December 11, 1948. Copies of the terms have been distributed to hon. members, as well as a statement of questions raised and answers given by the representatives of the Canadian government in the course of the negotiations, and also a report and documents relating to the negotiations for the union of Newfoundland with Canada, in which hon. members I think will find practically all the pertinent information that was before the representatives of the Canadian government and the delegation from Newfoundland. On examining it, I noted that there was one omission which is not substantial but which I regret, and which I hope will be rectified when there is a reprint of this historic document.

When we met in the senate chamber on December 11 to sign the terms of the agreement that had been arranged, I made a few remarks before the actual signing took place.