

The Prime Minister is preparing to make his address of welcome to the people of Newfoundland.

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): I should like to direct my first words today to the people of the new Canadian province of Newfoundland. I know I am speaking for the people of the other nine provinces when I say that we welcome you warmly as fellow Canadians.

In greeting you as fellow citizens we do not feel that you in Newfoundland have ever been strangers. In peace we have been happy to live and work beside you. In two wars we have been glad you were in our company and we in yours. We have the same traditions and the same way of life. We are both proud of our association in the British commonwealth of nations. We have shared, and continue to share, a common loyalty to His Majesty the King.

At this time, when we are taking a major step in the life of Newfoundland and of all Canada, the people of the nine older provinces and those of Newfoundland are equally aware that one circumstance that has contributed to union is our common loyalty to His Majesty the King. That common loyalty will continue to be one of the most important forces in the life of our united nation. With those thoughts in mind, I asked His Excellency the Governor General to convey a message this morning -- the first full day of the new union -- to His Majesty King George VI. The message reads as follows:

On the occasion of the entry of Newfoundland into confederation as a province of Canada I send to Your Majesty, on behalf of the government and people of Canada, the expression of our devoted loyalty, together with our sincere good wishes to you and Her Majesty the Queen. The people of Canada, those of Newfoundland and those of the other provinces of Canada, now one nation under the Crown, are happy to learn of Your Majesty's improvement in health, and join in wishing you a speedy recovery.

The union we celebrate today was not concluded without the most careful consideration by representatives of both Canada and Newfoundland.

In 1947, when the delegation from your national convention came to Ottawa to see if a satisfactory basis could be found for the political union, we were pleased. We had no hesitation in making it clear that we would welcome union. But we recognized that the decision was one for you to make yourselves. We were happy when you, the people of Newfoundland, decided by a free vote that you favoured union. And we are happy today to have the union completed.

In welcoming you as partners in the Canadian nation, we of the rest of Canada feel that you are joining a good country, a country of which you will come to be as proud as we are. Canada is a country with a distinctive character and distinctive qualities. Our nation in its origin was a union of two great races that have joined their talents without merging their identities. The union includes peoples of many other national origins. Our country covers a vast area between two oceans, with great differences of soil and climate and industry. But from end to end of Canada there is an ever-deepening sense of community of interest and of purpose. We have a common pride in being Canadians. We are proud of Canada's past and of the record of our men and women in peace and in war. We are confident of our country's future. We feel that our nation can hold its head high among the nations of the world.

With the pleasure we have in welcoming you of Newfoundland as Canadians there is mingled a feeling that you could have joined no