

and I would say unavoidable, for the United Kingdom Parliament to insert in section 146 the provision which I have just summarized.

In order to appreciate the situation as it now is, may I for a few minutes refer again to the events which hitherto prevented the entry into our great Canadian family of that colony by the sea. In 1869 the electors of Newfoundland decided against entry into our confederation; but in 1895, as was recalled a few minutes ago by the honourable senator from Vancouver South (Hon. Mr. Farris), after the financial collapse of the island, negotiations with Ottawa were carried on, but without success; they failed merely because of what I would call the unhappy bargaining which took place.

I pass now to the depression of 1930, which had tragic consequences for Newfoundland and resulted in the suspension of its constitution in 1934. Under commission government, and due mainly, I believe, to conditions arising from the war and in the post-war period, the finances of the island have steadily improved. At the end of 1945 the United Kingdom decided that a national convention should be elected by the people of the island. This convention was entrusted with the task of investigating and then making recommendations to His Majesty's Government concerning the alternative forms of government for the future administration of the ancient colony. It was stated that the choice of constitution would definitely be submitted to the people at a national referendum. This by the way was a clear affirmation of the democratic principle of self-determination in favour of the population of Newfoundland.

In 1947, as you remember, after its election the national convention resolved to send a delegation to Ottawa to ascertain what fair and equitable terms might exist for federal union. The delegates arrived in our national capital in June 1947 and completed their sessions with the committee of the Canadian cabinet on September 29. One month later, on October 29, 1947, Prime Minister King wrote to the Governor of Newfoundland, enclosing a statement relating to the terms of union which the Canadian Government considered to be fair and equitable for both countries, and which it was willing to recommend to our parliament. A condition, which was absolutely essential, provided that:

—the people of Newfoundland indicate clearly and beyond any possibility of misunderstanding their will that Newfoundland should become a province of Canada.

This quotation is taken from the report of the Department of External Affairs, Conference Series 1948, No. 2, page 58. Honourable senators, this historic letter, written by the

senior statesman of the Commonwealth, is another formal statement of our democratic ideals. We Canadians clearly adopted the attitude that our friends from Newfoundland were to be given full opportunity to make their own choice, freely and voluntarily. We are not responsible for the subsequent events which took place in St. John's, and London, England. It would not be proper for me to condemn or approve the decision of the national convention in refusing, by a vote of 29 to 16, to include in the questions to be submitted at the referendum the alternative of union with Canada. Neither do I intend to comment upon the fact that the United Kingdom government decided to the contrary. As recalled this afternoon, a poll was held in Newfoundland on June 3, 1948, and 69,400 electors favoured a return to responsible self-government; while 64,006 wanted to join our Canadian federation of autonomous provinces. Only 22,311 voted for the continuation of the so-called commission government for an additional five years. This latter solution was definitely discarded, and as there was no clear majority in favour of either of the other two forms of government, a second poll was held on July 22 of last year. Almost 85 per cent of the total eligible electors cast their votes, but the majority in favour of federal union was only about 7,000. The score was 78,323 in favour and 71,334 against.

Hon. Mr. David: The honourable senator has said that 71,000 were against the union with Canada. I think he has made a slight error. 71,000 were in favour of the other proposition referred to in the referendum.

Hon. Mr. Gouin: I accept the correction. I only meant, from a practical point of view, having a choice between the two alternatives.

Hon. Mr. David: It did not mean that they rejected union with Canada; they just expressed their desire to continue responsible government.

Hon. Mr. Gouin: My honourable friend will have an opportunity to give a fuller explanation later. My understanding is that the Newfoundlanders were first given the opportunity of joining Canada or of continuing as a self-governing colony. At all events, after that verdict, our former prime minister, as one of the last acts in his long and glorious tenure of office, invited the duly authorized representatives of Newfoundland to come here in order to negotiate the final terms of the agreement. The Newfoundland delegation of seven members arrived in Ottawa on October 5, and on December 11, six of them signed the agreement which is now submitted for our approval. Our present Prime Minister