

The provisions of the Quebec resolutions which related to Newfoundland had on the whole been advantageous from the Newfoundland point of view. The terms which were drawn up by the Newfoundland Legislature in 1869 and which were accepted by the Canadian Government later that year were even more attractive. This in part reflected the positive attitude of Sir John A. Macdonald who, though he was always careful to act constitutionally, consistently favoured Newfoundland's entry into the Canadian federation. Toward the end of 1869, the Canadian and British Parliaments took the steps required to bring Newfoundland into confederation subject to parallel action by the Newfoundland Legislature.

This action was never taken. The Newfoundland election of 1869 was fought almost entirely on the confederation issue and, in contrast to the result in 1865, the proposal that Newfoundland join Canada went down to a resounding defeat. In 1869, as there had been in 1865 and during the intervening years, there was public discussion of the pros and cons of confederation which, *mutatis mutandis*, foreshadowed the debates of the 1945-1949 era. It was only the 1869 campaign, however, which resembled the later one in scope and intensity. In the 1860's the vast majority of the Newfoundland people lived in the southeast part of the island and were far removed from Canada. In the 1865 campaign and in the debate which went on, off and on, during the ensuing three years, the substantive issues had been discussed mainly in the Legislature, in newspaper editorials and in the relatively well-informed circles in which educated people lived and moved. The outcome of the 1865 campaign reflected the outlook of an electorate which, told by the government of the day that confederation would be good for them and for Newfoundland, voted substantially for it. In 1869, in contrast, a strong anti-confederate campaign, compounded of both fact and fiction, was also mounted and carried to the remotest corner of every outport. In the wake of improved economic conditions, Newfoundlanders were now less anxious about their material prospects and paid attention to warnings of domination and potential exploitation from the mainland. They voted by and large to stay where once their fathers stood.

The words of one verse of the anti-confederation song to the contrary notwithstanding,<sup>3</sup> it seems unlikely that a desire to retain the British connection was to any significant extent a determining factor. Among the commercial and governing élite there may have been a belief that, when it came to assisting Newfoundland to throw off such encumbrances as the treaty rights enjoyed by the French on the "French shore," there was more to be gained from the British connection than from a new and untried association with the government in Ottawa.<sup>4</sup> In short, Newfoundlanders who did not feel it essential to maintain their own inde-

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<sup>3</sup>Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf, Come near at your peril, Canadian Wolf.

<sup>4</sup>In the long run, this belief proved partly illusory. While French treaty rights were eventually wound up, the British government persisted well into the twentieth century in placing good relations with the United States ahead of Newfoundland's interest in penetrating the United States fish market and in liquidating United States treaty rights in Newfoundland. In this neo-colonialism, the British government sometimes received veiled assistance from the government in Ottawa.