

were rather expressing a preference for a different method of approach. We in Canada believe we know something of responsible government; the very phrase itself originated here; and this very year is the centenary of the achievement of responsible government in Canada. One thing is sure, the objective itself is more important than the approach, and when union is achieved it will give to the people of Newfoundland the fullest measure of responsible government, both as an autonomous province, and as a full partner in a free and self-governing nations.

#### MR. WALSH REPLIES

The Honourable A. J. Walsh, chairman of the Newfoundland delegation, in reply, said:

Right Honourable Mr. St. Laurent:

I am happy to express to you and, through you, to the Government and people of Canada the appreciation of the Newfoundland Representatives of the warm and cordial welcome which has been extended to us this afternoon and of the very practical expression of welcome which we have received since our arrival in Canada yesterday. On behalf of the Government and people of Newfoundland, I have the honour to acknowledge the generous tributes paid to our country and its people on the occasion of our arrival to discuss terms of Union between our two countries.

Our countries have for many years been closely associated, particularly in those larger undertakings which arise from common allegiance and common national interest. Our peoples have been even more closely associated as individuals by reason of personal and business relations and, in many cases, daily contacts. There exists a spirit of genuine friendship and understanding between our peoples who have been drawn closely together as they have shared common dangers and have, with improve-

ment of communications, had the opportunity of more frequent and extended meetings.

#### DISCUSS FULL TERMS

We now meet as representatives of our countries and our peoples to consider and discuss together the question of Union of our two countries and to arrive at an agreement upon the full terms and arrangements by which they will join together within the framework of that masterpiece of political and constitutional vision - the British North America Act.

With the events leading up to the federation of the colonies in 1867 and the circumstances surrounding the union you will all be more familiar, of course, than we are. Newfoundland was invited to send delegates to the Quebec Conference in 1864 and its two representatives reported on their return that they had signed the report of the conference with the full conviction that the welfare of the Colony would be promoted by entering the union. The question was submitted to the people and a Government pledged to Confederation was returned. New terms were drafted and a delegation again came to Canada where complete agreement was reached. Upon these terms the question of Union was again submitted to the people but was decisively defeated. Whether the people of Newfoundland were wise in the final decision upon the issue at that time it is difficult now to say, as the circumstances and conditions existing in Newfoundland were greatly different from those in the case of all the other Colonies and there is no case exactly parallel which may be used for comparison. On one ground the decision cannot be questioned and that is that it was made by the people in the exercise of their democratic right. In 1895 a delegation again came to Canada but agreement could not be reached. Politically, Newfoundland has continued

alone with a unitary system of government.

Our people have naturally been concerned with their own history and their own problems and have not found it necessary to take more than an academic interest in the history and development of the federal system. Within the past two years, however, the question has become one of immediate interest to them and at a plebiscite held on July 22 past the majority of the electors expressed the wish that Newfoundland enter into confederation with Canada. As a result of the vote at the plebiscite and in accordance with the assurance given to the people of Newfoundland when they were informed of the questions to be submitted to them, we were appointed by the Government of Newfoundland, following the issue by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister of Canada on July 30, past of a statement in which he said:

"The Government will also be glad to receive with the least possible delay authorized representatives of Newfoundland to negotiate terms of Union on the basis of my letter of October 29, 1947, to the Governor of Newfoundland, and the document transmitted with it".

Before the plebiscite the people had had the benefit of full discussion of the proposed arrangements for the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation which had been submitted by the Government of Canada to an elected National Convention which had been sitting in the Island and which had sent to Canada a delegation of its members to ascertain what fair and equitable basis of federal union between the two countries existed. As you are well aware, Sir, that delegation discussed the question with a committee of your Government. As a result of these discussions much valuable information respecting the public services of both countries was obtained by both