

chamber I stand amongst some of the most distinguished of Canada's senior statesmen, men whose voices carry weight in the councils of the world, and whose worth has been proven on a stage of great vastness and scope. I could wish that an abler representative of Newfoundland were in my place today; but I know that the honourable senators; with their well-known kindness and courtesy, will exercise tolerance and forbearance, and I am confident that I can rely upon the sympathetic understanding of my fellow Newfoundlanders who soberly realize the importance of the momentous events which have made recent history.

This is an occasion which will live forever in the history of Canada, and particularly in the records of the tenth province, for since the Senate last opened, this country has grown in area and in population, and the representatives of ten provinces, instead of nine, meet here in solemn conclave today.

Newfoundlanders heard with great pleasure the welcome which the Governor General gave us in the Speech from the Throne, and it was a great day for all concerned when the oldest British colony and the youngest dominion became the newest province.

Truly, Canada today stretches from sea to sea. When I first entered this building which houses the Parliament of Canada, I read with emotion and pride the inscription which is chiselled above the main entrance, "The wholesome sea is at her gates, her gates both east and west". In imagination and with heartfelt sincerity, may I be permitted to stand by the sea on the easternmost tip of Newfoundland, and across our broad and spacious land extend the hand of fellowship to my brother citizens who live beside the shores of the broad Pacific? And then, for a moment which would be immortal, I would see all the vastness that is Canada—its rich and fertile land, its energetic and devoted people, its solidarity and its progress—bounded on both sides by the wealth and the walls of two mighty oceans. Truly, honourable sirs, this is a great and glorious land, a nation which is reaching ahead to grasp and secure the future, whose position of power and pride is permanent. It is a solid land, a lasting land, and its record of sober achievement and steady growth is in itself the best assurance of its greater future prosperity. It is a land where faith in the future is justified by the works of the past.

Those honourable senators who are aware of the fact that the decision of Newfoundland to join with Canada was taken by a rather small majority of the Newfoundland people, may be interested to know some of the factors which influenced public thought on this issue. Confederation first became a public issue at

a general election in 1869. The political party which introduced it was badly beaten, and for more than eighty years nobody dared to risk political extinction by raising the question again.

To understand their antipathy to confederation, let us take a superficial glance at the people of Newfoundland during the four and a half centuries in which they have lived on the island. It was the hope of liberty and freedom which, from the very beginning caused them to leave their homeland and make the difficult and dangerous voyage across the almost unknown Atlantic. They wanted personal freedom; they wanted to be rid of the restrictions and injustices of Tudor and Stuart England. They were prepared to pay a heavy price for that freedom in the wild lands and on the wilder seas of a practically unknown country. They established themselves in many hamlets along the coastline, and began to wrest a living from its waters and rugged soil. The coastline extends roughly about 6,000 miles, and now comprises upwards of 13,000 settlements. It was a wild and rugged life and only the fit and determined could survive, but it gave them a freedom which was almost absolute. However, they were not for long allowed to enjoy their freedom in peace. The long arm of the west country merchants, backed by ignorant and often dishonest officials in England, reached out to suppress them, to destroy their homes and to exterminate them as a colony. Throughout most of its history, their country and their rights have been pawns in the hands of outsiders who have had no regard for the interests of the people.

With such a background, is it surprising that through the centuries there had grown amongst the people an almost fanatical desire to keep their isolation at all costs. External associations had brought them nothing but injustice and spoliation, and even death. The hand of the outsider had only been raised to plunder, fine and imprison, and to destroy their homes and drive them into the wilderness. They had secured responsible government with great difficulty only a few years before, and their greatest desire was to be left alone. They feared political associations with anyone because of the bitter experience of the past.

But the world at large was moving much faster than Newfoundland. Changes in national and international relations were taking place. Recent years had seen a revolution in the methods of production and of international trade. Our country was completely dependent upon foreign markets; our fortunes fluctuated with theirs. To them we had to sell nearly all that we produced, and from them we had to buy nearly all we con-