

Union with Canada. A delegation from the Convention was accordingly sent to Ottawa in June, 1947. Its task was to enquire what fair and equitable basis might exist for the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation. For a period of about four months a committee of our Government joined with that delegation to exchange information and to enquire into the many and complex matters that would arise should union be undertaken. Then, on October 29, 1947, Mr. Mackenzie King, as Prime Minister of Canada, sent to the Governor of Newfoundland, a statement of the terms that the Canadian Government believed would constitute a fair and equitable basis of union. These terms were made known to the people of Newfoundland and Canada. A majority of the people of Newfoundland have since indicated in a plebiscite their support of Confederation with Canada.

The Canadian Government welcomed the result of the plebiscite of last July. In a statement issued on July 30, 1948, shortly after the result was known, Mr. King said;

"As Prime Minister of Canada, it is a pleasure for me on behalf of Canada to welcome, warmly and sincerely, the decision of the people of Newfoundland.... The Union, when effected, will seal in constitutional terms a close and fraternal association that has existed, in war and in peace, between the two countries over many years.... together, as partners, we may look forward to the future with more confidence than if we had remained separate political communities."

NO LOSS OF IDENTITY

For Newfoundland, entry into Confederation will not, of course, entail any loss of local identity. Provinces are well-defined units within the federal system, having complete autonomy within their constitutional jurisdiction. Included in the provincial sphere are, of course, such

matters as education and property and civil rights, and these are fundamental to the preservation of what is peculiar to the local community in each part of Canada.

Mr. King's statement on July 30 went on to say:

"The Government will also be glad to receive with the least possible delay authorized representatives of Newfoundland to negotiate the terms of union on the basis of my letter of October 29, 1947, to the Governor of Newfoundland, and the document transmitted with it. In these negotiations any special problem which may arise in connection with the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation will, I am sure, receive most careful consideration. Before final action is taken, the Government will recommend the resulting agreement to the Parliament of Canada for approval."

In the latter connection, Mr. King recalled his statement made in the House of Commons on June 23, 1947, that "on the part of Canada no final decision would, of course, be taken without the approval of Parliament."

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY

We are meeting here today with the authorized representatives appointed by His Excellency the Governor of Newfoundland. It is our mutual responsibility to examine and settle the final terms of union between Newfoundland and Canada.

The following members of the Government have been designated, together with myself, to meet with you, the delegation from Newfoundland:

The Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Howe;
The Minister of National Defence, Mr. Claxton;
The Minister of Finance, Mr. Abbot;
The Minister of National Revenue, Dr. McCann;
The Minister of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Gregg;
The Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Mayhew;

and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Pearson.

Our other colleagues will, of course, also be available to participate in our discussions whenever that may appear to be desirable.

FIRST JOINT TASK

It is the wish of the Government that the delegation from Newfoundland should have every possible assistance during the negotiations and a courteous and ready response to their requests for information. One of the matters to be settled is the question of procedure. That is a first joint task of the committee and the delegation.

Much exacting and painstaking work has been done here during the last few months in preparation for your coming. I am sure that the labours on your part have been equally heavy. In the forthcoming discussions the people of Canada will, I know, wish both parties God-speed. For my own part and that of all my colleagues in the Canadian Government, I would assure you of our close and lively interest, in whatever degree each of us may from time to time directly participate.

It is true that much of our discussion will relate to matters of detail; and that the representatives of Canada and Newfoundland alike have a duty to safeguard the interests of those whom they represent. But I like to think that we shall not lose sight of the fact that we are seeking to complete a union which will be one nation with an over-riding common interest and common loyalty for all its citizens. I dare to hope that the result of our labours will commend itself to the vast majority of the people of Newfoundland as well as to most of those who are already Canadians. I prefer to believe that many, if not most, of those who, in Newfoundland, voted for Responsible Government were not thereby necessarily voting against union with Canada, but