

government; and confederation with Canada. If no form of government receives an absolute majority, a second vote will be held some time later on the two forms receiving the largest support.

I think it would be useful were I to remind the house of the recent steps preceding the present announcement. It will be recalled that last summer a delegation from the national convention visited Ottawa to ascertain what fair and equitable basis might exist for federal union of Newfoundland and Canada. A committee of the cabinet was appointed to meet with the Newfoundland delegation. Several meetings were held during the summer for the exchange of information and exploration of the many issues that would be involved in union. At the close of these meetings a comprehensive report was issued, copies of which were tabled early in the present session of parliament.

After due deliberation the government sent the governor of Newfoundland, for transmission to the national convention, a statement of terms believed to constitute a fair and equitable basis of union of Newfoundland with Canada should the people of Newfoundland so desire. In a covering letter under date of October 29 last to the governor, I said in part:

I feel I must emphasize that as far as the financial aspects of the proposed arrangements for union are concerned, the government of Canada believes that the arrangements go as far as the government can go under the circumstances. The government could not readily contemplate any change in these arrangements which would impose larger financial burdens on Canada. On the other hand, with respect to those matters which are primarily of provincial concern, such as education, the government of Canada would not wish to set down any rigid conditions, and it would be prepared to give reasonable consideration to suggestions for modification or addition.

The statement of terms transmitted by the Canadian government was discussed at length by the national convention in Newfoundland. The convention, however, voted 29 to 16 against recommending the inclusion of confederation on the referendum ballot. Subsequently many telegrams, bearing the names, it is said, of some 50,000 voters, were sent to members of the convention for transmission to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations requesting that the people be permitted to vote on the question.

The national convention was only empowered to make recommendations regarding the questions to be included on the referendum ballot, decision on the matter remain-

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

ing with the United Kingdom government. The dispatch from the United Kingdom government made public today in Newfoundland explains that—

—the terms offered by the Canadian government represent the result of long discussion with a body of Newfoundlanders who were elected to the convention and the issues involved appear to have been sufficiently clarified to enable the people of Newfoundland to express an opinion as to whether confederation with Canada would commend itself to them. In these circumstances and having regard to the number of members of the convention who supported the inclusion of confederation with Canada in the ballot paper, His Majesty's government have come to the conclusion that it would not be right that the people of Newfoundland should be deprived of an opportunity to considering the issue.

The decision to include confederation on the ballot having been taken by the United Kingdom government, the outcome will be watched with deep interest by the people of Canada. The question as to their future form of government is, of course, one for the people of Newfoundland alone to decide. Neither the government nor the people of Canada would wish to influence in any way their decision. Should the people of Newfoundland express clearly their will that Newfoundland should enter confederation, I am sure that the people of Canada will welcome them as partners in a larger Canada. Should they decide otherwise, this decision, I am no less sure, will be received with understanding and respect by the people of Canada.

Mr. DORION: Will the proposed arrangement addressed by the Canadian government to Newfoundland be submitted to this house before any agreement is concluded, in case the result of the referendum in Newfoundland is favourable to its entry into confederation?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The answer is yes. That is part of the terms we are prepared to recommend.

PRIVATE BILLS

FIRST READINGS—SENATE BILLS

Bill No. 127, for the relief of Joseph Onfroy Pilon.—Mr. Maybank.

Bill No. 128, for the relief of Thelma May Heggie May.—Mr. Maybank.

Bill No. 129, for the relief of Molly Renetta Fry Bist.—Mr. Maybank.

Bill No. 130, for the relief of Patricia Potter Parker.—Mr. Maybank.

Bill No. 131, for the relief of Helen May Smith Saunders.—Mr. Maybank.