

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Senate resumed from yesterday, the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General's Speech at the opening of the session, and the motion of Hon. Mr. Golding for an Address in reply thereto.

Hon. Vincent P. Burke: Honourable senators, in continuing the debate on the Speech from the Throne, I wish first to congratulate the mover, and the seconder of the Address in reply. I do so, not for the reason that custom directs such a course, but rather because I honestly and sincerely believe that each of them, in turn, made a valuable contribution to the debates of the house and acquitted himself in conformity with its best traditions.

I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation to honourable senators for the kindness and courtesy with which they have welcomed me to this chamber.

Honourable senators, I am proud that my native province, Newfoundland, has become a part of the great Canadian nation, one of the greatest nations of the world. I am proud to be a citizen of Canada. In the national referendum in Newfoundland there were three choices—commission government, responsible government, or confederation. Confederation won, and probably 90 per cent of our population are today in favour of confederation, thus indicating that its advocates had taken the correct turning at the crossroads of public opinion.

Newfoundland has many firsts to her credit in history. It was here that England made her first success in maritime discovery on that day in June, 1497, when John Cabot's crew sighted Cape Bonavista, the first land on this side of the water to be seen by Englishmen. It was here that she made her first attempt at colonization and empire building. It was the banks of Newfoundland that first tempted Englishmen forth from their narrow seas to brave the billows of the Atlantic; and here on the banks of Newfoundland were trained those seamen who made England Mistress of the Seas, and who carried her flag into every sea and clime. It was here, in 1615, that England set up her first courts of justice in the New World. It was here that the first trans-Atlantic cable station was built on this side of the water. It was here, in Bay Bulls' Arm, Trinity Bay, in 1858, that the first trans-Atlantic message was received. It was here, at Signal Hill, on December 12, 1901, that the first wireless message was received by Signor William Marconi. It was here, in the old city of St. John's, on June 14, 1919, that those

gallant and intrepid airmen, Sir John Alcock and Sir Arthur Whitten Brown, started on the first successful non-stop aeroplane flight from the New World to the Old, landing at Clifden, Ireland, some sixteen hours after leaving the old city of St. John's.

The first book ever written in the New World was written in Newfoundland. This book, entitled *Quodlibets*, was written by Robert Hayman, Governor of John Guy's Colony in Bristol's Hope, about 1622. Newfoundland was the first of the countries on the American continent to adopt daylight saving time—in June, 1917. The bill enacting the legislation was sponsored by the late Honourable John Anderson.

I feel I should mention here another epoch-making event in the history of the world, which took place in Newfoundland only recently. I speak of the Council of Placentia, August 9, 1941, at which was signed the Atlantic Charter. H. V. Morton wonders "if in years to come children will be taught the date—'Council of Placentia, August 9, 1941'." The Atlantic Charter ranks with Magna Carta, so we have here in Newfoundland the Runnymede of the 20th century.

St. John's is the oldest city on the North American continent north of Mexico. It was an important port in 1527, and there were houses there 100 years before the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock. Sabine states in his history of the North American Fisheries that in 1522 there were 40 or 50 houses in Newfoundland. The first settlers in Newfoundland were the winter crews—men left behind to erect and keep in order the premises, and build and repair boats. Hayes, who was with Sir Humphrey Gilbert on his famous voyage in 1583 when he took possession of Newfoundland in the name of Queen Elizabeth, writing in his Journal at St. John's, mentions the weather observed in winter, also the boats built in the new colony—clear proofs of the existence of winter crews. Gilbert's party seem to have been not very well supplied with provisions at the time, for Hayes says:

Commissioners were appointed, part of our own company and part of theirs to go into other harbours adjoining (for our English merchants command all there) to levy our provisions; whereupon the Portugals (above all other nations) did most willingly and liberally contribute. In so much as we were presented (above our allowance) with wines, marmalades, most fine rusk or biscuits, sweet oils, and sundry delicacies; also we wanted not of fresh salmon, trouts, lobsters, and other fresh fish brought daily unto us. Moreover, as the manner is in fishing, every week to choose their Admiral anew, or rather they succeed each in orderly course, and have weekly their Admiral's feast solemnized, even so the General, captains and masters of our fleet were continually invited and feasted.