

of a desire for more beneficial economic relations. In February a Convention resolution asked the government what steps could be taken to ascertain what commercial concessions the United States might grant in return for its defence rights; the government ruled that any such approach would have to be made through London. A little later a more forthrightly pro-United States faction in the Convention introduced a motion which would have had it send a delegation to Washington to try to negotiate terms of union. It was roundly defeated. Clearly, political union with the United States — supposing it were possible — was not something most responsible Newfoundlanders were yet prepared to contemplate. Nevertheless, in straw polls and letters-to-the-editor a disposition to draw closer to the United States was surfacing outside the Convention. In May 1947 G.K. Donald, Wainwright Abbott's predecessor, went so far as to report, "I do believe that a substantial majority of the people would vote for union with us."

Join America movement

In November 1947, after the "proposed arrangements" for confederation had been presented to the National Convention, there began a movement which in the long run almost made Donald's bold prediction seem little more than premature. This was the movement in favor of economic union with the United States. It was launched by a group calling itself the Union with America Party. Reporting its formation, Abbott said, "That it will rally considerable support cannot be doubted." In the months that followed Abbott reported on a wide range of proposals, running from wild-eyed advocacy of a union which would carry all the blessings of amalgamation short of actual statehood to sober warnings from some prominent businessmen that, before confederation with Canada was seriously considered, the benefits of closer economic relations with the United States should be carefully examined.

In March 1948, after the Commonwealth Relations Office had told the US Embassy in London that the "alternative" of economic union with the United States would not be on the ballot paper in the referendum, Abbott advised the State Department that it was far from a dead issue because it might "help Responsible Government to beat confederation with Canada and thus give itself a new lease on life." Shortly afterward it was in fact invigorated by Chester A. Crosbie (father of John Crosbie, finance critic in the Conservative shadow cabinet in the House of Commons), leading fish merchant and head of one of Newfoundland's most respected families. Crosbie announced that he had accepted the presidency of the newly-formed Party for Economic Union with the United States. (The Party's Campaign manager was Don Jamieson, now Canada's High Commissioner in London.) The Consulate-General reported this in a plain-language telegram marked "Urgent" which concluded with the statement, "New party expected to attract Confederation votes and to enhance chance for return to self-government."

Throughout the referendum campaign the new party marched arm-in-arm with the Responsible Government League, building substance into a platform hitherto largely one of principle. Both groups had difficulty dissociating themselves from spokesmen for impracticable forms of economic union. However, Crosbie made clear that he was advocating a free-trade area, which would leave both par-

ties free to impose duties on third countries independently, and his movement's overall effect on the prospects for Responsible Government was extremely positive.

State Department quandary

As early as March 24, 1948, Abbott went so far as to advise the State Department, "Popular sentiment here favors US over Canada or Great Britain and it is admitted by competent judges that any party which could achieve closer economic or even political ties with US would receive overwhelming support." In some ways this was an overstatement. Nevertheless, in the balance of his telegram Abbott put his finger on the crux of the matter so far as the role of the United States was concerned. He wrote: "Founder of Responsible Government League this morning expressed to me his acute fear that Department might inadvertently be responsible for Confederationist victory . . . if it made public any indication that it would discourage Crosbie's proposal for economic union . . . and expressed hope Department would give no clue to its attitude as self government would have no chance of winning if all hope of closer economic relations were removed . . . If Department is to avoid charge of influencing coming referendum it is essential no indication of its attitude become known." (It is not clear how Abbott obtained information about the State Department's attitude.) The State Department replied, "Department agrees your recommendation and will avoid any action which might give rise to charge of influencing coming referendum." However, in the event, the State Department came close, indirectly, to doing just that.

Late in April 1948 the *St. John's Sunday Herald* sent telegrams to most members of the US Senate inviting support for economic union with Newfoundland. Shortly afterward J.B. McEvoy, a prominent Newfoundland lawyer and a quiet Confederate who had been the National Convention's last chairman before it was dissolved at the end of January, visited Judge Manley Hudson of the Harvard Law School and asked for a written opinion as to the feasibility of the scheme. Judge Hudson sent McEvoy a lengthy memorandum in which he concluded that the proposed union was theoretically possible but added that, after conferring in Washington with "well-informed friends," he did not believe it feasible. The memorandum was published on May 8 and was effectively exploited by J.R. Smallwood and other Confederates. Meanwhile the *Sunday Herald* was getting and publishing a large number of favorable replies to its telegrams to the US Senators.

On May 24 Geoff Stirling, editor of the *Sunday Herald*, visited Washington in the hope of seeing the President but called on a Mr. Wailes in the State Department instead. In the course of his conversation with Wailes, at which the latter's chief, Andrew B. Foster, was also present, Stirling (obviously having in mind Judge Hudson's "well-informed friends") asked Wailes whether the judge had consulted with anyone in the State Department when preparing his memorandum. The official account of the conversation, written by Foster, describes what followed: "Not knowing that Stirling was coming to see Mr. Wailes, I had not told the latter about my conversation with Mr. Hickerson [a Deputy Under-Secretary and Foster's chief] on May 21, when the latter told me that Hudson had been to see him. It did not seem desirable for me to mention Mr. Hudson's call on Mr. Hickerson." Foster added, "Mr. Stirling was very indignant about the Hudson memorandum and evidently