

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 31, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. PEDDLE—TWENTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF NEWFOUNDLAND'S ENTRY INTO CONFEDERATION WITH CANADA

Mr. Ambrose Hubert Peddle (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. My question of privilege concerns an incident which took place at one minute before midnight on March 31, 1949, 22 years ago, a number of some significance to the Prime Minister.

● (2:10 p.m.)

It was on this date, March 31, 1949, at one minute before the witching hour of midnight that nocturnal nuptials, or one might say a midnight marriage, took place between Newfoundland and Canada. The Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent, affectionately known as Uncle Louis, bore the ring, and Joey Smallwood, affectionately and otherwise known as Joey Smallwood, the shotgun.

For hon. members who are curious about the strange, eerie hour, here is the official explanation. There was a conflict of interest between one faction which wanted the event to coincide with the very beginning of the new fiscal year and the other faction which at any cost wanted to avoid All Fool's Day. Thus this mysterious but very delicate balance was struck.

Newfoundland was a good deal older than Canada, but despite the age differential 52.34 per cent—here is a significant number again—of Newfoundlanders felt the marriage could be successful while 47.66 per cent felt the marriage could never work. Most of us who supported Confederation felt sure it would survive at least 22 years, but had we known the only living father thereof would survive that long as premier the marriage might never have been solemnized. Anyway, we can take solace in the fact that he has been the best premier Newfoundland has had since Confederation.

Seriously Mr. Speaker—I see you are clutching the edge of your chair so I shall end soon—on this the twenty-second anniversary of Confederation, while I cannot speak nor would I presume to speak for our estranged brother, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), who wept bitterly when the banns were announced 22 years ago, I am sure that, generally speaking, we

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Newfoundlanders on this side of the House supported Confederation and, whether we did or not, we are proud to say today "We are Canadians".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Sixth report of Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs—Mr. Tolmie.

[*Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES CONVENTION ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING DEFINITIONS, INSPECTION, OFFENCE AND PUNISHMENT

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry) moved the first reading of Bill S-13 (from the Senate), to amend the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

AIR CANADA—FEASIBILITY STUDY AS TO ADVISABILITY OF CONSOLIDATING RESERVATION OFFICES

Question No. 720—**Mr. Orlikow:**

1. Did Air Canada commission a feasibility study as to the advisability of consolidating reservation offices across Canada and, if so, by whom was the feasibility study conducted and how much did this study cost Air Canada?

2. In how many cities did the feasibility study recommend that reservation offices for Air Canada be located, and what are the names of the cities so designated?

3. In which cities, where there are now reservation offices for Air Canada, will such offices be closed?