

The Address—Mr. W. J. Browne

ible government should be restored when the prosperity of the country was on a sound basis. This was not done. It is easy to understand our people becoming apathetic and lethargic. They were living well, nothing was troubling them, and they did not bother about politics any more. Nobody took the initiative strongly enough to put forward representations for the return of responsible government. At last the initiative was taken by the British government, which decided that it would hold a national convention. Forty-five members from forty-one districts in Newfoundland and Labrador sat in the convention in St. John's. They met on September 11, 1946, and for sixteen months they discussed all the various features concerning Newfoundland's economy and her political future.

Hon. members, I am sure, are aware that the delegation which was sent to England from the convention returned discomfited. A delegation was then sent to Ottawa and returned. In October, 1947, a letter was received by the Governor of Newfoundland from Mr. Mackenzie King laying down the terms upon which Newfoundland would enter confederation. Beyond those, he could not go. A firm of chartered accountants in Montreal found that the new province would have a deficit of over \$4,000,000 per year if those terms were accepted.

Later on, after the convention had turned down confederation, and the elections were held, another delegation came and the terms were changed. But let me tell you what happened in the convention, because I believe it should be known. By a vote of 29 to 16 the convention decided it wanted responsible government restored. The chairman said we could not have that alone on the ballot. Two things had to be put on the ballot, so it was decided to put on "commission of government" which no one in the convention wanted.

When the convention was closed the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in England said that the question of confederation had occupied so much of the time of the government members in Ottawa and had been so fully discussed in Newfoundland that the people should be in a position to vote on it. He believed, therefore, that they ought to have the right to vote on it, and that was done. The first referendum was carried out and there was a majority of five or six thousand in favour of responsible government. Commission of government was removed from the ballot, a second referendum held, and confederation won by a majority of approximately six thousand.

After that, we had more elections. I do not wish to go into the question too fully, but elections were held. Now, sir, it is only reasonable to believe that if an event of such

tremendous importance to the people as their future government is to be considered, then elected representatives should be the ones to consider the problem. Who was considering the fortunes of Newfoundland last year? A commission of government not elected by the people—in fact, some of them had been rejected by the people.

If there were to be negotiations with this great country of Canada, at what a disadvantage were our people when they had to pick men off the street and send them up here without the necessary prestige which the members who represented the government of Canada possessed? Contrast that situation with what occurred in 1895 when the delegation consisted of Mr. Bond, Mr. Morris, Mr. Emerson and Mr. Horwood. Mr. Bond afterwards became the Right Hon. Sir Robert Bond; Mr. Morris became Lord Morris, and Mr. Horwood was later knighted and made chief justice of the country. These were the finest men we had in the country who were sent up here at that time. Does it not stand to reason that, if a country is to be properly represented, this is the type of man we should send? Inexperienced men were sent this time and the right hon. the Prime Minister and his government must have seen they had a tremendous advantage in debating power over our so-called representatives.

Now, sir, I have stated to my constituents that if I was elected to this house I would ask someone on the government side to explain to me and to the people of Newfoundland—because it has not been explained as yet—what the principle was upon which the financial terms were decided in 1947 and in 1948. For some little time, sir, I have studied the question of confederation between the various provinces of Canada. As hon. members know, the principle adopted at that time was that the per capita debt of Canada and the per capita debt of the provinces were the bases upon which the financial terms were settled. That was the principle which was adopted in 1895, and that was the principle upon which the discussions had taken place at an earlier date.

I have before me the sessional papers of Canada for 1895. I will read from the memorandum the terms proposed by Mr. Mackenzie Bowell, the Prime Minister of Canada:

Canada will assume of present debt of Newfoundland, \$8,350,000.

Canada will assume an excess of debt over the \$8,350,000 amounting to \$2,000,000, a total of \$10,350,000.

The deduction is very simple. This is equal to \$50 per head of Newfoundland's population of 207,000. On the excess of \$2,000,000, Canada was to pay interest at five per cent per annum. In 1895, the position was that