

October 29th, 1947, a statement which made known to the people of Newfoundland the terms believed by the Canadian Government to constitute a fair and equitable basis of union between Newfoundland and Canada, should the people of Newfoundland desire to enter into Confederation.⁸⁵ In my covering letter, forwarding that statement, I said:

"Should the people of Newfoundland indicate clearly and beyond all possibility of misunderstanding their will that Newfoundland should become a Province of Canada on the basis of the proposed arrangements, the Canadian Government, subject to the approval of Parliament, would for its part be prepared to take the necessary constitutional steps to make the union effective at the earliest practicable date."

On Thursday last, July 22nd, the people of Newfoundland voted on the following alternative forms of Government for that country.

(a) Responsible Government as it existed in 1933 prior to the establishment of Commission of Government.

(b) Confederation with Canada.

The result of this vote, as communicated officially to the Government of Canada by the Governor of Newfoundland, is as follows:

(Figures to be inserted, including the proportion of the electorate which voted).

It will be noted from the above that a definite majority of the very high percentage of the electorate of Newfoundland which voted, has expressed its wishes in favour of Confederation. It will also be noted in this connection that, of twenty-five former electoral districts of Newfoundland, eighteen voted in favour of Confederation with Canada. It would seem, therefore, that the result of the plebiscite in favour of union between the two countries is "clear and beyond possibility of misunderstanding." This result was attained without any trace of influence or pressure from Canada.

The Government welcomes, and I believe the people of Canada also welcome, the result of the plebiscite. The union now to be effected, in consequence of the free decision of the people of Newfoundland, will merely seal in constitutional terms a close and fraternal association that has existed, in war and in peace, between the two countries over many years.

The Canadian Government is now consulting with the governments of Newfoundland and the United Kingdom in the working out of appropriate constitutional procedure for implementing decision taken by the people of Newfoundland. The Government will also be glad to receive with the least possible delay authorized representatives of Newfoundland to negotiate terms of union on the basis of my letter of October 29th, 1947, to the Governor of Newfoundland, and the document transmitted with it. Before final action is taken, the Government will recommend the resulting agreement to the Parliament of Canada for approval. In this connection I would recall my statement made in the House of Commons June 23rd, 1947, that "On the part of Canada, no final decision would of course be taken without the approval of Parliament."

⁸⁵Voir la pièce jointe, document 442.

⁸⁵See enclosure, Document 442.