

*The Address—Mr. Stick*

been said that the financial crisis in which we found ourselves was brought about by the depression. It would be truer to say that the depression hastened the crisis. We found ourselves in a position where we could not meet our obligations, and with sorrow we had to give up freedom, democratic freedom as we know it on this side of the water. A royal commission came to our country to investigate our conditions. It recommended a form of government called commission of government. We accepted it, and we accepted it in good faith. Unfortunately we found that progress without freedom is not obtainable. During the time of government by commission our people suffered as they had never suffered before. I have been amongst the people and I have come from the people, and I know what they suffered. I say that I never want to see it again as long as I live. Our people remembered these things. Because we felt that union with the other provinces would give us a measure of security, which we could never get if we had stood alone, we chose union. That was the main reason why we chose union. I was one of those who fought for it from the very beginning. It was not an easy choice for some of us to make. To give up the proud position which we had held for 450-odd years was not easy; but in choosing that side and going out and fighting for union I believed I did so in the best interests of my people, and I believe I did it in the best interests of this dominion. And now that we have union—thank God we have it—it is our job to put it to work. On what we do in this parliament in the near future, how we treat the people of Newfoundland, will very largely depend the happiness of our people.

I have been much encouraged since coming here by the kindly consideration which has been given to Newfoundland and its problems. I am glad to state here that the faith which I had before I came is sustained now, and I shall be glad to go back and tell my people that they have a sympathetic ear in Ottawa, that our just claims will be met, and that in union we shall be able to provide for our people as we have never been able to provide for them before.

I want to bring to the attention of this house the geographical position which Newfoundland holds in relation to the rest of the dominion. During recent days it has been said here that we in Canada did not come in contact with the war at first hand. The hon. member who said that did not live in Newfoundland. We did come in contact with the war at first hand in Newfoundland, and thousands of our people saw ships, laden with iron ore, torpedoed, and sent to the bottom in the twinkling of an eye with a

tremendous loss of life. We know what war means. We have experienced it at first hand. Many hundreds of ships have been torpedoed on our coasts, and the survivors have been landed at St. John's and cared for in our hospitals during the war. I mention these facts because I do not want Canada to make the mistake that the British Admiralty made in the period between the two wars when Great Britain concentrated her defences in Bermuda instead of in Newfoundland. That mistake cost us very dearly, and it very nearly cost us the battle of the Atlantic. If we had lost that battle we would have lost the war.

By this act of union Canada is now secure on her eastern border. If we had chosen otherwise I think that the party sponsoring economic union with the United States would have won. If that had happened, I believe that economic union would have taken place with that country, and this dominion would have been faced with the situation that she was faced with when Alaska was taken over by the United States. That great country to the south is a friendly country, it is true. But we wanted to keep Newfoundland British; we wanted to keep Newfoundland within the British commonwealth of nations; we wanted to link up with you, to make you stronger, so that your voice for peace raised in the future would be a strong and a united voice.

Some people have said that we should have had responsible government and that negotiation should have taken place as between governments. My reply to that is this: Economically speaking, we have gone through serious times before. The world situation in trade and commerce was none too secure, as we have had evidence of late. We believed that the only time we should come into the union was when we were in a financially strong position. That was the path of honour, and we chose that path. That is why we came in when we did—and I believe we did the right thing when we did it.

May I draw your attention to another point. At the very time when this great country was negotiating for the coming into being of the Atlantic treaty, my province entered into union with you. The fact is that we joined with you. Soon afterwards the Atlantic pact was signed, and this was followed by the lifting of the Berlin blockade, making the peace of the world more secure than ever before.

Those acts are related. Just at the very time when Canada's voice should have been united and strong, it was made that way by our act of union. And it may well be that, through this small act of ours, we may have played a big part in bringing about that