

From Hansard dated July 12, 1943 - Unrevised Edition.

MR. MACKENZIE KING:

. . . While I believe there is a time to consider the question of what is advisable and what may not be advisable with respect to having Newfoundland brought into confederation, this is not the particular moment at which it would be most advisable to discuss the question. As the hon. member knows, the government of Canada is most desirous of preserving the closest possible friendly relations with Newfoundland. We have given expression to our desire in the appointment of a high commissioner of the attainments which he himself has mentioned in the person of Mr. Burchell. Mr. Burchell has given very careful study to the questions that arise between both the Newfoundland and Canadian governments, Newfoundland and the United States, Newfoundland and Great Britain, and I think he would be the first to say that any discussion with respect to the possible bringing in of Newfoundland to confederation ought to be initiated on the part of the people of Newfoundland rather than on the part of members of this house certainly at this particular time. I took note of what my hon. friend had said, and I prepared with a little care the following words that I thought it might be wise to use if occasion should so demand. I would say that Canadians like and admire the people of Newfoundland. They are attached to them by bonds of sentiment and by the memory of dangers shared and victories won together. They look forward to a continuation of the friendship and cooperation which have increasingly marked our relations during recent years. Canadians are interested in the defence of Newfoundland which is so vital a part of the defence of the continent and the hemisphere. They hope that the people of Newfoundland will find some wholly satisfactory solution of the political and economic problems which confront them. They will be happy if, in any way, they can contribute to the solution of these problems, many of which are common to both countries.

If the people of Newfoundland should ever decide that they wish to enter the Canadian federation and should make that decision clear beyond all possibility of misunderstanding, Canada would give most sympathetic consideration to the proposal.