

to have been able most successfully to sound out Newfoundland opinion on the results of the referendum and to have acted with discretion and good sense.<sup>86</sup>

L. B. PEARSON

[PIÈCE JOINTE/ENCLOSURE]

*Mémemorandum du chef, la direction du Commonwealth britannique,  
au sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Head, British Commonwealth Division,  
to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

SECRET

Ottawa, July 29, 1948

VISIT TO NEWFOUNDLAND, JULY 24-28, 1948

During my visit to Newfoundland I talked with various individuals and groups (see attached list).<sup>†</sup> It was unfortunate that most of the Responsible Government leaders and several of the Confederate leaders were out of town fishing, this being the salmon fishing season — salmon fishing is something of a “rite” among St. John’s professional and business men at this time of the year. The following is a summary of my impressions, based on conversations, notes of which are attached, on discussions with Mr. Bridle and on a summary analysis of the returns.

(A) WITH RESPECT TO THE REFERENDUM

(1) The whole Island, outside the Avalon Peninsula, is overwhelmingly for Confederation. The strongest areas against Confederation are the city of St. John’s, Bell Island and Harbour Grace, where there is a heavy Catholic vote.

(2) The Catholic vote in the St. John’s, Bell Island and Harbour Grace areas was “instructed.” Before the first referendum the *Monitor*, the organ of the hierarchy, came out with a strong editorial against Confederation. This produced a considerable reaction and further editorials then said that these were views of the editor and that Catholics were of course free to vote as they saw best in the interests of the country. The effect of the first editorial was, however, not overcome. The bishops, in conversation with me, distinctly stated, however, that with “their people” it was not a question of faith and morals but that their people were traditionally supporters of Responsible Government and that the terms offered by Canada did not provide sufficient revenues for the province without recourse to heavy taxation and almost certainly property taxation. (I was told by others that the church is the largest landlord in St. John’s, as well as the owner of a great deal of property used for ecclesiastical or educational purposes.) The hierarchy was, however, unable to keep all the Catholic vote in line in the Avalon Peninsula, (e.g., Sir Edward Emerson and Mr. McEvoy, and I am told that there was a considerable Catholic vote for Confederation in Placentia).

(3) The Catholic vote on the west coast was strongly Confederate, Bishop O’Reilly taking a neutral stand — it is thought he privately favours Confedera-

<sup>86</sup>La note suivante était écrite sur ce mémorandum:

<sup>86</sup>The following note was written on the memorandum:

Interesting indeed. ST. L.[AURENT]