

On Thursday, 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 to date, as communicated officially to the Government of Canada by the Governor of Newfoundland, is as follows:

Out of a total registered vote of about 176,000 the vote for Confederation is about 77,869, and for Responsible Government 71,464. The total majority to date is thus over 6,400. It is estimated that about 500 votes are still to be counted but this would not materially alter the result. It will also appear that close to 85% of the eligible voters exercised their right to vote.

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 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. We have ascertained that, for its part, the United Kingdom Government which at present is responsible for the administration of Newfoundland under the United Kingdom-Newfoundland Act 1933, in view of the result of the referendum is in agreement with the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation. The union when effected will 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. In these negotiations any special problems which may arise in connection with the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation will, I am sure, receive most careful consideration. 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."

The union of Newfoundland and Canada, two North American democracies in the British Commonwealth of Nations, will add strength to both. Together, as partners, we can look forward to the future with more confidence than if we had remained separate political communities.

As Prime Minister of Canada it is a pleasure for me on behalf of Canada to welcome, warmly and sincerely, the decision of the people of Newfoundland. As a member of the Government of Canada, it has been a privilege to have had to do