

land in the early years of this century when he was trying to tell Sir Robert Bond what to do about everything from confederation to relations with the United States.

At this stage of history we confront what at first glance seems like yet another paradox of British policy-making.⁸ Why, if confederation with Canada had been the considered British remedy for the Newfoundland problem since 1865, did the Amulree Commission so summarily dismiss it? Clearly, out of a sense of realism. Lord Amulree, doubtless aided and abetted very closely by P. A. Clutterbuck, the Dominions Office official who was Secretary of the Commission and who later did so much both as an Assistant Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and as British High Commissioner to Canada to make confederation a reality, understood very well what was possible at the time and acted accordingly. Perhaps that is why, when the Commission had completed its work, a grateful government acceded to his request for a silver salver in lieu of a silver ink-well on the grounds that he had already received an ink-well as Chairman of another Commission.

In its report, submitted in October, 1933, the Amulree Commission recommended, *inter alia*, that the existing form of government be suspended until such time as the Island might be self-supporting again and that a special Commission of Government, headed by the Governor and composed of three other members from Great Britain and three from Newfoundland, be created to take the place of the existing Legislature and Executive Council. The Commission of Government was to be responsible to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs who would assume general responsibility for the Island's finances. It would be understood that, as soon as Newfoundland's difficulties were overcome and the country was again self-supporting, responsible government, *on request from the people of Newfoundland*, would be restored.

The italicised words, seemingly innocuous and forthcoming, went almost unnoticed in the debate and discussion which followed in Great Britain and in Newfoundland. One would have thought that champions of Newfoundland's hard-won democratic rights would have balked at the proposal to insert this gratuitous condition, for by implication it suggested that the people of Newfoundland might not want responsible government restored, at least in its old form. Besides, who in this context were "the people of Newfoundland?" Possibly the proposed stipulation failed to attract attention because neither the white paper based on the Amulree Report nor the body of the consequential Parliamentary Bill explicitly mentioned it. As late as November, 1933, the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, Mr. Alderdice, submitted a plea that any future request for the restoration of self-government which might come from the elected representatives who had abrogated it should be honoured when presented. In the debates on the Newfoundland Bill in the British House of Commons in December many

⁸ For still another, see the documents. There was a period, especially during the Second World War and even after it, when the British government veered toward keeping Newfoundland in the British fold and nurturing it. More than anything else, this probably reflected the affection which had developed for Newfoundland because of its unflinching and self-effacing support of Britain in two wars.