

CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND

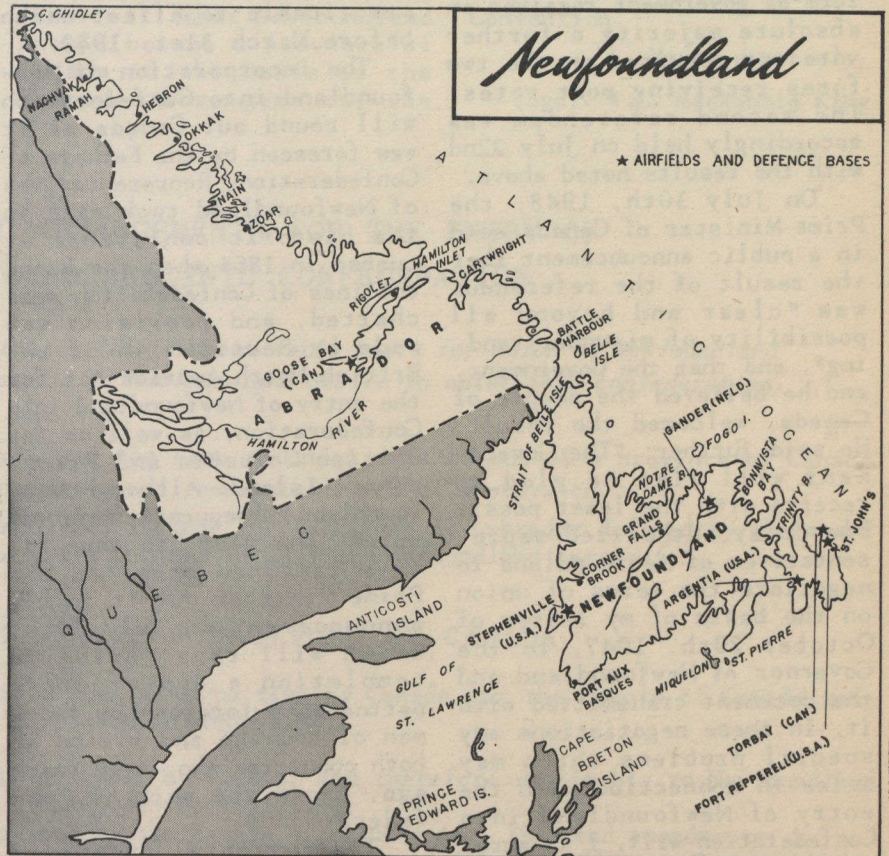
On July 22nd, 1948, the people of Newfoundland decided by a majority of over 7,200 to join Canada. The referendum on July 22nd, the second within less than two months on the question of Newfoundland's political future, was confined to two questions: restoration of the Island's pre-1934 constitution (or in popular terms "Responsible Government"), or Confederation with Canada, on the basis of the terms sent to the National Convention by the Canadian Government in October last. The vote in the referendum was unusually large, about 85 percent of the eligible voters exercising their franchise. On a geographical basis about 70 percent of the votes outside the Avalon Peninsula, which lies at the south-eastern corner of the Island, were in favour of Confederation. In the Avalon Peninsula, on the other hand, about 66 percent of the total vote was for the Responsible Government, the heaviest vote for Responsible Government, being in the City of St. John's. Eighteen of the 25 electoral districts, including two on the Avalon Peninsula, showed a clear majority in favour of Confederation.

NO SNAP VERDICT

The vote on July 22nd was by no means a snap verdict. The future political status of the Island has been the subject of intensive discussion in Newfoundland over the past two years. In the spring of 1946, a National Convention was elected "to consider and discuss... the changes that have taken place in the financial and economic situation in the Island since 1934, ... to examine the position of the country, and to make recommendations to His Majesty's Government as to possible forms of future government to be put before the people at a national referendum." The Convention began meeting in September

1946. On February 28th, 1947, it passed a resolution to send a delegation to Ottawa "to ascertain from the Government of Canada what fair and equitable basis may exist for fed-

Government should be placed on the referendum ballot. A motion to include Confederation on the ballot was, however, defeated by 27 to 16 votes. Following this a flood of



eral union of Newfoundland and Canada." The delegation visited Ottawa late in June for discussions with a Committee of the Canadian Cabinet, remaining there until September. On October 29th, the Canadian Prime Minister wrote the Governor of Newfoundland setting forth a statement of terms believed by the Canadian Government to constitute a "fair and equitable basis for union."

REFERENDUM BALLOT

After prolonged debate the National Convention recommended to the United Kingdom Government that restoration of Responsible Government and continuation of Commission of

telegrams containing, it is said, the names of about 50,000 voters poured in protesting the refusal of the majority of the Convention to include Confederation among the questions submitted for referendum. The United Kingdom subsequently decided to include the question on the referendum ballot on the ground that it would be unfair to the people of Newfoundland to deprive them of the opportunity of expressing their opinion on the question of federation.

At the first referendum, which was held on June 3rd after prolonged public discussion of the various alternatives, Responsible Govern-