

The Address—Mr. Kent

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

ANSWERING OF QUESTIONS ON ORDER PAPER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggarr): In case the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) may be too optimistic and the debate on the address should not be concluded shortly, will some provision be made to answer the questions now appearing on the order paper?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): If it is the desire of the house to have the questions answered tomorrow, I will ask my colleagues to be prepared to do so.

Mr. Coldwell: That will be satisfactory.

Mr. St. Laurent: Then the questions might be answered tomorrow.

Mr. Knowles: And notices of motion for the production of papers.

TRANS-CANADA AIR LINES

REMOVAL OF OPERATING HEADQUARTERS FROM WINNIPEG TO MONTREAL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. William Bryce (Selkirk): Can the Minister of Trade and Commerce add anything to his statement of September 19 in reply to my question regarding the transfer of Trans-Canada Air Lines personnel from Winnipeg to Montreal?

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): I expect the president of T.C.A., who has just returned from England, to be in my office this afternoon. I shall try to get the necessary information and give it to the house at an early date.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed, from Monday, September 26, consideration of the motion of Mr. Maurice Boisvert for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. W. R. Kent (Humber-St. George's): Mr. Speaker, when this debate was adjourned last Monday evening I had reached the point where the national convention had sent a delegation to the government of Canada to discuss the possible terms of union of Newfoundland with Canada. The delegation returned and reported the terms obtained to the national convention, where they were discussed at length. From what I have previously stated, it will be seen that the national convention had no power to decide the future form of the government of Newfoundland, but merely had the power to

recommend to His Majesty's government forms of government to be placed before the people in a referendum. By a vote of 29 to 16 the convention declined to recommend that confederation with Canada be included on the referendum ballot.

Because of the long discussion in the convention respecting confederation, and having regard to the number of members in the convention who had supported its inclusion on the ballot, His Majesty's government decided to place confederation on the ballot paper. In addition to this, some 50,000 Newfoundlanders, by personal letter or telegram, communicated to His Excellency the Governor their desire to have confederation placed on the ballot paper. The referendum was held, and the final result was a majority for confederation. It will be seen, therefore, that the procedure adopted to decide the future form of the government of Newfoundland was designed in a truly democratic manner to leave that decision to the people, and to the people alone. The vote was upon a clear-cut issue, and the people decided in favour of confederation with Canada. The results of the provincial and federal elections recently held in that province have placed the seal of approval on that decision.

I was, and still am, a strong believer in confederation. I have not found a solid argument against it. Those people in Newfoundland who supported confederation had good reason for supporting it. They believed that the economy of our province was linked with that of Canada, and that Newfoundland's best opportunity for future development was as a part of Canada. They saw the benefit in Canada's great social security program. Benefits to the people of Newfoundland have already accrued in the form of family allowances, increased old age pensions, the veterans' charter, unemployment insurance and others. On the other hand, Newfoundland brings to Canada her fisheries, pulp and paper and mining industries, her possibilities for water-power development, her airfields, and all her still undeveloped resources. One should consider also the value of this province from a strategic point of view in the scheme of hemisphere defence.

Perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words with reference to the riding of Humber-St. George's, which I have the privilege of representing. It is comprised of the three electoral districts of St. George's-Port au Port, Humber, and St. Barbe, and extends along the whole west coast of the island from cape Ray in the south to Boat harbour in the strait of Belle Isle in the north. The potentialities for development of the west coast of Newfoundland are very high. The lands comprising the fertile and beautiful valleys and

[Mr. Abbott.]