

that this delegation could be received in Ottawa soon after the vote. I mentioned that, in August, it might not be possible for the interested Canadian Ministers to be available in Ottawa for discussions with this delegation. However, as much of the discussion will presumably be with senior officials and not Ministers, perhaps the Canadian Government would consider it feasible for the delegation to arrive in August.

4. The Commonwealth Relations Office and the Governor are greatly disturbed by your suggestion that April 1st, 1949, is the earliest suitable date for union. They feel that the longer the delay between the referendum and the date of union the more chance there is of serious political unrest in Newfoundland. As Commission Government has been rejected by the voters, the sooner it is ended the better. (If the forthcoming referendum should give a majority for responsible Government, the plan is to have an election for the House of Assembly in December and to inaugurate responsible Government on January 1st, 1949). The Commonwealth Relations Office hope the Canadian Government might consider the possibility of having a special session of Parliament in Ottawa in the autumn with a view to making January 1st the date of union. If that is impossible, it is urged that the date of union should at least be advanced to March 1st because the April 1st date presents two practical difficulties:

(a) The new Provincial Government would be starting the financial year without a budget; if the Government started to function on March 1st it would have a month in which to prepare for the beginning of the financial year;

(b) The financing arrangements for the 1949 fish catch must be made known to the fishermen before the end of March; if there is no provincial Government till April 1st there may be chaos in the fishing industry.

5. The next question is, by what legal process is union to be accomplished. The Commonwealth Relations Office said that they thought the United Kingdom Government would be most anxious to avoid putting the terms of union through the Parliament of the United Kingdom once there has been a satisfactory vote for confederation, the terms of union are (except for a few financial clauses)⁶⁵ of no concern to the United Kingdom, and the Commonwealth Relations Office thinks it would be unsatisfactory to all concerned if a bill covering necessary detailed terms of union had to be submitted to Parliament here.

6. The solution, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Governor think, lies in an interesting plan which, so far as I know, has not previously been considered in Ottawa. It is to amend S. 146 of the B.N.A. Act to provide that the Commission of Government of Newfoundland, fortified by the result of a referendum, should be competent to make the address to His Majesty which, as S. 146 now reads, must be made by the non-existent "Legislature" of Newfoundland.

⁶⁵Dans le Newfoundland Act de 1933, la Grande-Bretagne avait accepté certaines obligations par rapport à la dette de Terre-Neuve.

⁶⁵Under the Newfoundland Act of 1933, Great Britain had accepted obligations with respect to certain aspects of the Newfoundland debt.