



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CONCLUDING PLENIARY SESSION OF THE  
MEETINGS BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL  
DELEGATION FROM NEWFOUNDLAND AND  
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF CANADA.

Speeches by Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada, and Mr. A.J. Walsh, Chairman of the Newfoundland Delegation, in the Senate Chamber, Ottawa, December 11, 1948.

Mr. St. Laurent's Speech

Mr. Walsh and Gentlemen:

For two months the official Delegation from Newfoundland has been working out with Representatives of the Government of Canada precise terms for the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation. I am sure all of us are agreed that our labours have been characterized by a spirit of mutual understanding and good-will. The Representatives of the Government of Canada have endeavoured to appreciate the position and views of the Delegation from Newfoundland, to be responsive to requests for information, and generally to facilitate the negotiations. I hope we have succeeded. I know I am speaking for all the Canadians who have participated in our discussions when I express warm appreciation of the broad outlook and co-operative attitude of the Newfoundland delegation.

I feel that I shall be speaking for the Newfoundland delegation, as well as for my colleagues, when I express our thanks for the hard work and efficient service of the officials and the clerical staffs on both sides, who have been associated with these arduous and complicated negotiations.

All of us in this room know it has not been a simple task to arrive at exact terms of union. At this moment, it may be appropriate to recall what had been accomplished before our labours began on October 6th. Time and study were required to determine whether there was a fair and equitable basis for the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation. A delegation from the National Convention of Newfoundland spent four months here in Ottawa in 1947, exploring this question with a committee of the Canadian Government. Following that study, Mr. Mackenzie King communicated to the Governor of Newfoundland the general terms the Canadian Government would be prepared to recommend to Parliament as a basis for union. Then the people of Newfoundland were given, in a democratic manner, an opportunity to decide whether, on that basis, they wished Newfoundland to unite federally with Canada. When the people of Newfoundland, by a majority vote in a referendum on July 22, 1948, had expressed their desire to enter into Confederation, Mr. King announced that the government of Canada would be glad to receive authorized representatives of Newfoundland to work out the precise terms of an agreement for union. That agreement has now been concluded, and as Mr. King indicated, the next stage in Canada will be its submission to Parliament for approval. It will also require to be approved by the Government of Newfoundland and confirmed by an act of the British Parliament.

The agreement has required long and careful consideration. You for Newfoundland and we for Canada have had to do our respective bests to safeguard the interests of those whom we represent. Happily, our primary concern has not been for the narrow advantage of each, but to assure our common interests in one enlarged nation. We have, it is true, had certain difficulties. But, as D'Arcy McGee once said when talking about objections that had been raised to Confederation, "I have never...of any state being founded or enlarged or delivered from danger, except by surmounting difficulties."

In many ways the problems we have surmounted have been more difficult and more complex than those faced by the Fathers of Confederation in 1867. Government then was a simpler business than government today, and the economies of the British North American colonies of that day were more alike than are the economies of Newfoundland and Canada today. In the years intervening since 1867, we have gone our separate ways; we have developed differently; and we have built up quite different administrative systems. Marriage between adults of mature years requires greater adjustment and a broader tolerance of differences between the parties than does marriage between younger folk just starting to assume the responsibilities of life. So, too, with the union of mature countries. We may, I think, congratulate ourselves that we have successfully surmounted these difficulties in such a relatively short space of time.

Now at last we have reached agreement and the terms of agreement for the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation have been signed. The date of union on which we have set our sights is March 31, 1949. Upon that day, I profoundly hope we shall see the fruition of our work. Some details in our agreement may not meet the approbation of all. But I would ask those who may not be satisfied with every detail to think of the general good which flows from this historic act. It is my sincere hope - and my belief - that the future will find the vast majority of people in what is now Canada and the vast majority of people in Newfoundland in continued and warm agreement as to the justice and wisdom of these terms of the union.

The entry of Newfoundland into Confederation will, I am confident, be of mutual advantage to both parties. When, over 81 years ago, the plans for the union of the British colonies of North America were being drafted, the problem of defence and security was in the minds of a good many people who favoured union. During two wars, Canada and Newfoundland have worked in exceedingly close co-operation for mutual defence and the achievement of victory. The question of defence and security is very much in our minds again today. With Newfoundland forming the tenth province of Canada, I think that both we in Canada and you in Newfoundland will feel more secure than heretofore in this troubled world.

Union will bring our two peoples much closer together. That, to my mind, will be its most important consequence. Already we have much in common. We enjoy the same heritage. We have the same political traditions. We are certainly not strangers to each other. Now we shall be able to cultivate to the full our old associations and to build new ones. As Mr. Bradley said when the delegation from the National Convention came to Ottawa in June, of 1947, "should Newfoundland become the tenth province of your Canadian Union, you will be receiving as a partner a proud people eager and determined to pull their weight in generous measure". Canadians are equally "eager and determined to pull their weight".

Canada has made tremendous strides in the eighty-one years that have passed since the four original provinces joined in Confederation on July 1st, 1867. We are a united people. Our strength, both physical and economic, has increased many fold. We are prosperous.

But we have not ceased working for an ever-brighter future, with increased well-being and security for our people. In Confederation, the people of Newfoundland will share all the advantages now enjoyed by the rest of the Canadian people of whom they will then form a part.

Je tiens à dire un mot du caractère essentiel de la nation canadienne. Et pour mieux souligner ce caractère essentiel, je m'exprime maintenant en français. Notre nation, dont vous êtes à la veille de faire partie, repose sur l'association, sur un pied d'égalité, des deux grandes races qui sont si intimement mêlées à l'histoire de Terre-Neuve aussi bien qu'à celle du Canada. Notre pays a deux langues officielles et deux cultures qui, bien que parentes, sont distinctes, ont des affinités étroites. Mais nous ne formons qu'un seul peuple. Nous sommes heureux de vous recevoir, vous de Terre-Neuve, dans cette nation. Nous sommes convaincus que vous travaillerez avec nous à maintenir ce caractère distinctif de la nation canadienne, dont sir John A. Macdonald disait, peu avant la fin de sa vie, il y a près de soixante ans: "Tous avons maintenant une constitution qui place tous les sujets britanniques sur un pied d'égalité absolue, qui leur reconnaît des droits égaux dans tous les domaines: langue, religion, propriété et personne. Il n'existe pas de race supérieure dans ce pays; il n'existe pas non plus de race vaincue."

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes plus enclins à parler de citoyens canadiens que de sujets britanniques, mais l'idéal reste le même. La tolérance mutuelle et l'égalité des associés sont et demeureront les fondements de notre nation.

With the signing of the agreement by which Newfoundland is to become a province of the Canadian nation, we have concluded that part of our labours, and concluded them successfully. In another and in a much more important respect, our common task is only beginning. No nation can ever stand still. The fact that we are here is evidence of that. Newfoundland has felt the change of the times and the development of new factors in its political and economic life. Canada too has felt the force of change and development. Sir Frederick Carter, one of the original Fathers of Confederation from Newfoundland, said of Canada, on one occasion, "as you advance we must advance". With Newfoundland entering Confederation, I believe the advance towards greater unity and prosperity on the northern half of this continent will be steadier and surer.

Gentlemen, I am confident of our united future. My colleagues in the Government and I are happy and proud to have had this opportunity of working with you. We, with the people of Canada, look forward to the last great step in Confederation. We believe that, with you, we have had the privilege of completing the structure of a "Union strong and great".

#### Mr. Walsh's Speech

Mr. Prime Minister and Members of the Committee of the Government of Canada:

For over two months the representatives of Newfoundland have been meeting with you to discuss the many problems - financial, economic, administrative and constitutional - which are involved in the union of Newfoundland with Canada or will arise as a result of that union. Together we have been endeavouring to work out an arrangement between

our two countries which will serve to promote the welfare of both and protect the interests of each.

The Terms of Union which we have just signed on behalf of our Governments embody the agreement reached on financial, economic and constitutional matters and with the British North America Acts, will form the basis on which the constitutional edifice of the proposed new province will rest. Of less formality but great practical importance is another document which deals largely with administrative matters and records Government policy respecting them in their application to Newfoundland during the period immediately following union.

The great constitutional principles applying to this Federal system of Government were worked out prior to 1867 by the Fathers of Confederation and applied to the four original provinces when they united to form one Dominion under the name of Canada, and these principles also applied with but slight, if any, variation to provinces subsequently admitted to the union. Apart from providing for the machinery of Government in the province, because of the present constitutional position of Newfoundland, it has not been found necessary to deal to any great extent with constitutional matters.

Since 1867, however, great developments have taken place in Newfoundland and her economy has broadened considerably. The people of this new province will depend upon its economy to provide a livelihood for themselves and their families and careful consideration of economic questions was necessary at the recent discussions in order, as far as possible, to ensure the existence of conditions which would provide reasonable prosperity in its industries.

With the Government of the Province will remain the responsibility of providing the major public services which are so essential to the welfare of the people. Financial questions of great importance to the province arose for discussion, as undoubtedly they have on similar occasions in the past. After long and careful study of the services provided in Newfoundland the costs involved in providing necessary services for a thinly scattered population, the system of raising public revenues at present applying and the sources from which revenues may within provincial powers be drawn, agreement on these important questions was reached.

In many respects and for different reasons the policy of Newfoundland, particularly that respecting regulation of trade and commerce and promotion of industrial enterprises, has differed from the policy of Canada, and provision has in many cases been made respecting matters of importance to Newfoundland in these fields.

Our discussions have, therefore, covered a wide range of topics, because without doubt union will involve changes of great importance for Newfoundland in many directions. Many of the questions were discussed by the committee of the National Convention which in 1947 met representatives of your Government to ascertain whether a fair and equitable basis for union existed. The Proposed Arrangements submitted to the National Convention following those discussions were debated in the Convention and were before the people when in July last they, by a majority, at a referendum voted in favour of union with Canada. In accordance with the undertaking given to the people by the Government of the United Kingdom before the referendum, this delegation was appointed to discuss and settle the full terms of union. In signing the Terms of Union today we, as representatives of Newfoundland, do so with the knowledge that they make more adequate provision for the needs of the proposed new province than those before the people at the referendum, and in our opinion assure to the provincial Government a period of financial stability.

The signing of this important document is one of great historic significance. The provisions of the document as a constitutional instrument will probably be examined and construed by courts on many occasions; its financial provisions will probably form the basis for claims and counter-claims. Its great importance, however, lies in recording an agreement between representatives of two countries to unite into one great country with a common citizenship for its people who will in the strength of unity stand together and face the future with confidence. The occasion is one of particular significance because of the failure of efforts to bring about union on former occasions with the result that Newfoundland stood alone on the eastern seaboard of a great country which expanded and grew in size and importance. This occasion marks a necessary and important step towards the final realization of the vision of the Fathers of Confederation, who saw a great new nation standing astride the northern half of the continent. With approval by your Parliament and the Government of Newfoundland and confirmation by the Government of the United Kingdom, this vision will be fully realized on March 31st, next.

For a large number of the people of Newfoundland the union will mean changes. While many look forward with confidence to a great future in this union, many feel that the destinies of Newfoundland could best be worked out by the people of Newfoundland themselves standing as a separate entity in the world. As in many other agreements of this kind, much depends upon the desire of both sides to make the arrangement succeed. The people of Newfoundland will undoubtedly obtain many benefits from this Union; they will also make a great contribution to the further development of Canada.

We, representatives of Newfoundland, are proud of our participation in this great event. We assure you that Newfoundland and her people will play their part as citizens of Canada and we place great faith in the obvious desire of your Government and your people that our country and our people will find a prosperous and happy place in this great union.

1949 Mar 22, 1949.