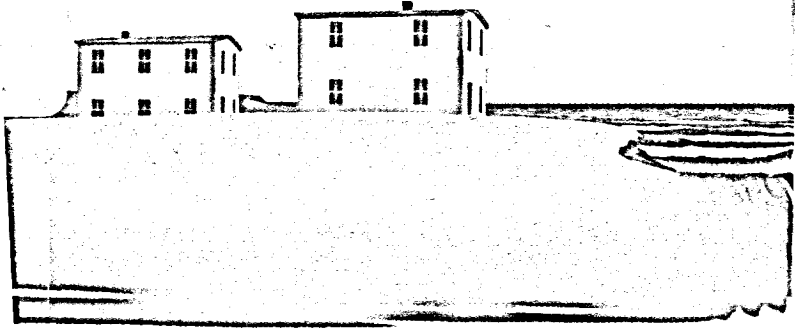
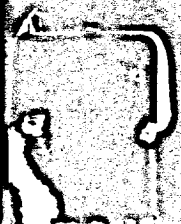


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NEWFOUNDLAND: THE ROAD TO CONFEDERATION

Wilfrid Eggleston



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CANADA

NEWFOUNDLAND:
THE ROAD TO
CONFEDERATION

by

Wilfrid Eggleston



NEWFOUNDLAND

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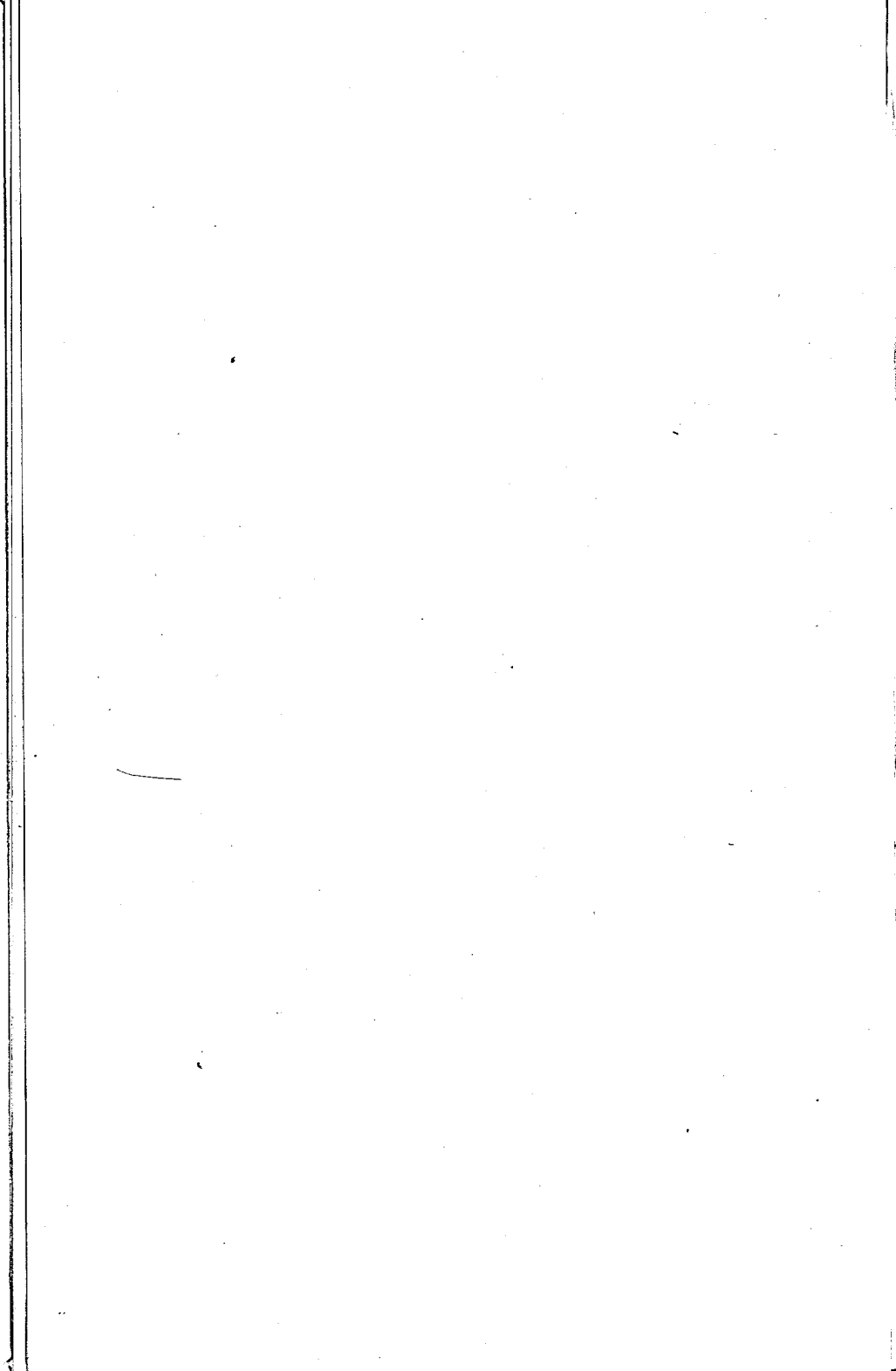
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Ottawa, 1974

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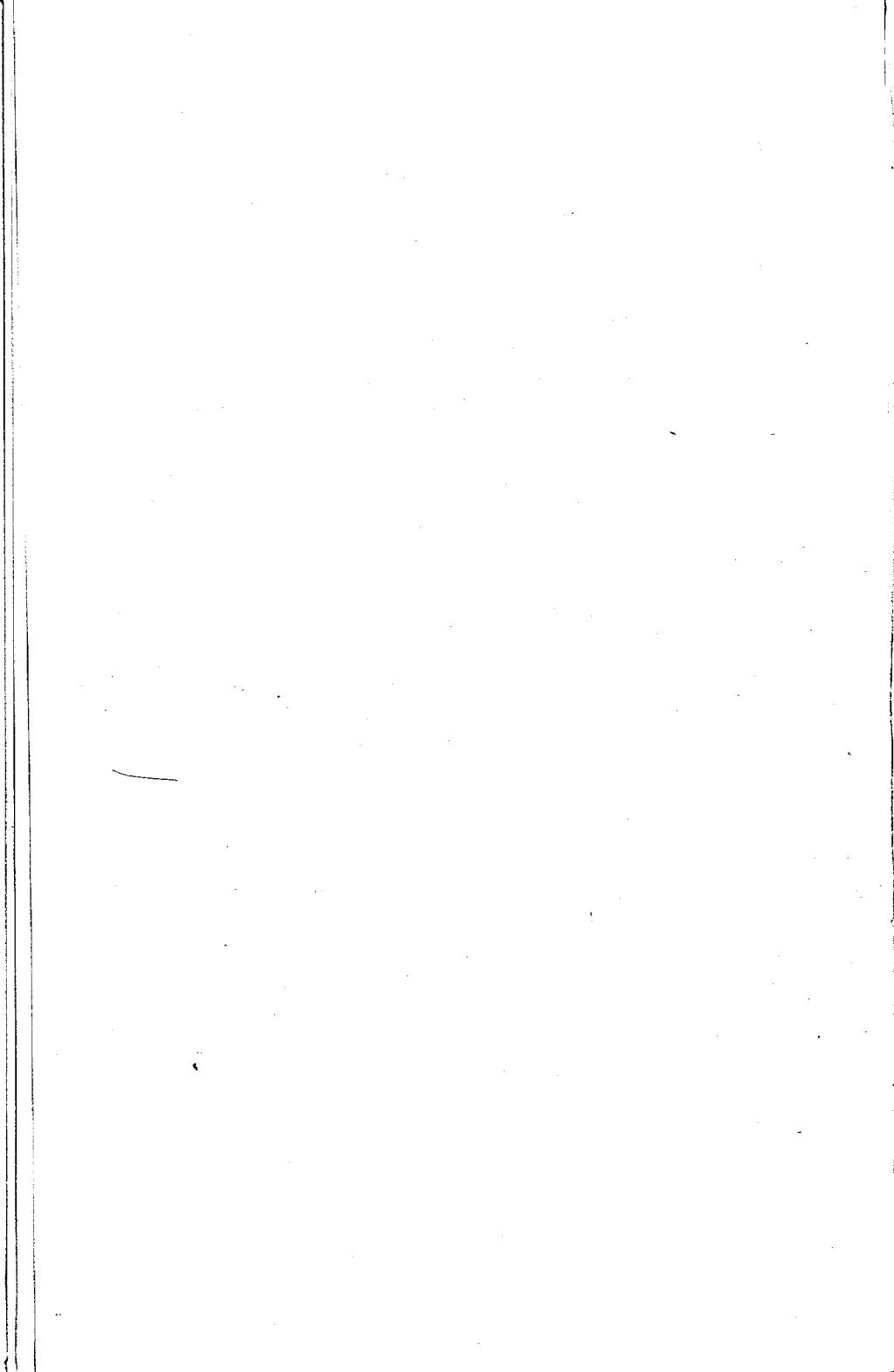
Wilfrid Eggleston

Wilfrid Eggleston was a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery for fifteen years, writing on national affairs for the *Toronto Star*, *Reuters*, *Saturday Night*, the *Manchester Guardian* and other agencies and publications. He was in the Gallery in the years 1945-49, when the terms of union between Newfoundland and Canada were being explored and then negotiated.

Mr. Eggleston served on the secretariat and research staff of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations from 1937 to 1939.

He is the author of *The Road to Nationhood*, a chronicle of Dominion-Provincial relations, published by Oxford University Press in 1946; *The Queen's Choice*, a story of Canada's capital, published by the Queen's Printer in 1961; *Canada's Nuclear Story*, published by Clarke, Irwin in 1965; and other books. He was the first director of the School of Journalism at Carleton University (1947 to 1966).

The opinions expressed in this booklet are personal to the author and are not necessarily those of the Government of Canada.



FOREWORD BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

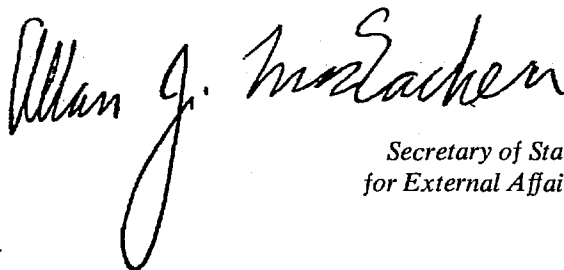
In the twenty-five years since Newfoundland joined Canada the newest Canadian province has found a special place in the hearts of Canadians. Indeed, to young people in many parts of the country Newfoundland may seem always to have been a part of Canada. Of course, Newfoundlanders, conscious of their own long and colourful history, know better. Yet even they, like all Canadians inside or outside Newfoundland, may wish to learn more about the events which led up to federation in 1949.

This booklet should help to meet that need. The essential facts are already a matter of public record but the booklet adds a new dimension, being based on unpublished documents in the archives of the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa; they show how the Newfoundland question was handled by the Canadian Government in the 1945-49 period, and they depict events in Newfoundland at that time as reported by Canada's High Commissioner there. At the same time the booklet, which has been written by a distinguished independent author and journalist, possesses a high degree of objectivity.

The Department of External Affairs has also brought out a volume of documents on Newfoundland's actual relations with Canada in the 1935-49 period, and a second volume of documents which will show how confederation was brought about will be published shortly. This latter volume will cover in detail the events more summarily related in this booklet.

These steps were initiated by my predecessor, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, who took part in the negotiations leading up to confederation. They are being taken as one means of honouring Newfoundland in this year which marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the union of Newfoundland and Canada. This event not only rounded Canada out geographically; it also brought into Canada the Newfoundland people with (in the Prime Minister's words on April 1st last) "their rich traditions, their centuries-old distinctive culture, their strong, independent spirit and their many talents".

I should like to pay tribute to those who played a rôle in the political events leading up to confederation, whether they were for or against union. They were all participating in a major event of Canadian and Newfoundland history. I should like also to pay special tribute to the late Louis S. St. Laurent who, on the Canadian side, was outstanding in his unwavering perception that Newfoundland is of capital importance to Canada, and to J. R. Smallwood who, on the Newfoundland side, was truly the architect of confederation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Allan J. Rock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A".

*Secretary of State
for External Affairs*

Ottawa,
September 1974

TIMETABLE OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS

- December 11, 1945: The Attlee Government in London announces its intention to provide for an elected National Convention.
- June 21, 1946: Election of the National Convention.
- September 11, 1946: National Convention holds first meeting.
- April 24, 1947: A delegation from the National Convention leaves for London.
- June 25, 1947: Talks begin at Ottawa between a delegation from Newfoundland and the Canadian Government.
- October 29, 1947: Canada sends *Proposed Arrangements for the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation to St. John's.*
- June 3, 1948: First referendum held.
- July 22, 1948: Second referendum held.
- July 30, 1948: Prime Minister Mackenzie King accepts the results of the second referendum as a basis for formal negotiations.
- October 6, 1948: Negotiations to reach final terms of union begin at Ottawa.
- December 11, 1948: Terms of union are jointly signed in the Senate Chamber at Ottawa.
- February 18, 1949: Royal Assent given at Ottawa to a Bill ratifying the terms of union.
- March 23, 1949: Amendment to the *British North America Act* given Royal Assent at Westminster.
- March 31, 1949: Newfoundland becomes the tenth province of Canada.
- April 1, 1949: Confederation ceremonies held at Ottawa and St. John's.



Public Archives of Canada

Ceremony on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, April 1, 1949: Prime Minister St. Laurent initiates the work of carving Newfoundland's coat-of-arms on the arch over the main door of the Parliament buildings. Cléophas Soucy, sculptor of the original arch, and Hon. Gordon Bradley look on.

NEWFOUNDLAND: THE ROAD TO CONFEDERATION

THE ARCH OF CONFEDERATION

John Pearson's magnificent Peace Tower is the crowning feature of Canada's Parliament Hill and has become, like the maple leaf, a symbol of Canada around the world. The main entrance to the Centre Block is through a fine Pointed Gothic arch at the foot of the tower. The carvings on the chaste yet ornate archway were designed in 1936 by Cléophas Soucy, who planned a series of shields to display the nine provincial coats of arms within a *motif* of native foliage, animals and birds.

It is easy to arrange nine shields around a Gothic arch — one shield at the summit, four on each side. But a difficulty arose. Which of the nine provinces was to crown the arch? Ontario? Or Quebec? They had formed the original Province of Canada, but as a unit. The solution adopted was to place twin shields side by side at the summit. Then the coats of arms of the four western provinces, in geographical order, were carved down the west side of the arch, and those of the three maritime provinces down the eastern side. That, of course, left a vacant shield at the foot of the eastern segment. It was a blank, but it might also be a portent.¹ It must be confessed that when the carving was done there was nothing in sight to suggest that the blank stone escutcheon would soon hold another provincial coat of arms.

However, as the years went by, more than one Newfoundlander, more than one Canadian, for that matter, pausing at the entrance to the Parliament Buildings, noted the blank shield, and wondered . . . And inside the arched entrance everyone could read the stirring lines written by John Almon Ritchie, Ottawa poet and playwright:

*The wholesome sea is at her gates
Her gates both east and west.*

¹ It is also said that the architect, John Pearson (an uncle of Walter Marshall who was Secretary for Finance in the Newfoundland Government when Newfoundland joined Canada and for many years thereafter), planned it that way. Indeed the remarks of Canada's Prime Minister on April 1, 1949 (see p. 110) suggest that it was the Canadian Government that planned it.



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AT QUEBEC.
 OF DELEGATES OF THE LEGISLATURES OF CANADA, NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND AND NEWFOUNDLAND,
 TO SETTLE THE BASIS OF A UNION OF THE BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCES, OCTOBER 27th, 1864.

27 8 24 5 17 14 20 9 7 11 13 20 25 29 21 30 28
 29 6 4 2 23 10 1 15 3 12 18 16 19

A mari usque ad mare, says the legend on the Canadian coat of arms. It had not been quite true in 1867, but it became increasingly true soon after, in 1871 and 1873. It would always have been more meaningful if Newfoundland (which, as Sir John A. Macdonald said, held the key to Canada's eastern gateway) had elected to come in at the time of confederation in 1867.

The latchstring seemed to be out, and the porch lights burning, in that eventful period leading up to Canadian confederation in 1867. The Newfoundland delegates to the Quebec Conference of 1864, F.B.T. Carter and Ambrose Shea, had been given full delegate status (though they had been sent as observers and lacked authority to commit); the admission of Newfoundland was expressly provided for in the *British North America Act* of 1867; and one Canadian editor was so confident of the outcome that in the first edition of the *Canada Year Book* in 1867 he included the relevant statistics for Newfoundland.

The cause of confederation was indeed dear to the heart of a few Newfoundland leaders in the late 1860's, but it left the majority of the people unmoved. R. J. Pinsent in 1865 was voicing an opinion widely held when he remarked (in the Newfoundland House of Assembly) that "there is little community of interest between Newfoundland and the Canadas. This is not a continental Colony." It seemed, indeed, "a westward extension of the Old World rather than an eastern extension of the New". The Lieutenant Governor, Anthony Musgrave, (no doubt reflect-

Among the delegates to the Quebec conference were: (2)¹ Hon. J. A. Macdonald, Attorney General of Canada West;² (3) Hon. Georges E. Cartier, Attorney General of Canada East; (4) Hon. George Brown, President of the Executive Council of Canada; (5) Hon. Oliver Mowat, Postmaster General of Canada; (6) Hon. A. J. Galt, Minister of Finance of Canada; (8) Hon. H. L. Langevin, Solicitor General of Canada East; (10) Hon. C. Tupper, Provincial Secretary of Nova Scotia; (15) Hon. S. L. Tilley, Provincial and Financial Secretary of New Brunswick; (21) Hon. F. B. T. Carter, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland; (22) Hon. J. A. Shea, Leader of the Opposition in Newfoundland; and (23) Col. the Hon. J. H. Gray, Leader of the Government of Prince Edward Island.

¹ Numbers relate to numbers at bottom of photograph

² In 1864 Upper and Lower Canada (corresponding to the present provinces of Ontario and Quebec) had been united in one province of Canada but for certain purposes, including the administration of justice, they were administratively separate and were known as Canada West and Canada East.

ing the policy of the British government of the day) was keen to promote the idea of union, but Carter and Shea had to stand on the sidelines¹ while the federal union of Canada was being formed.

In 1869 the Carter administration decided to try again, and managed to win support in the legislature for sending a delegation to Ottawa to negotiate terms of union. Sir John A. Macdonald was receptive, and an agreement was reached. The Canadian Parliament was held in session long enough to embody the agreement in an Address to Queen Victoria praying for Newfoundland's admission into the Dominion under Section 146 of the *British North America Act*. All that was needed now was similar action at St. John's. But in the autumn of 1869, after a rousing campaign in which the perils of joining Canada were graphically depicted, the Carter administration was decisively beaten in the general election, and confederation became a dead issue for many years.

In 1895, after a series of physical and economic disasters, the government of Newfoundland sounded out Ottawa to see if federal union offered a way out of a desperate fiscal situation. The times were not propitious. Canada itself was suffering from the cumulative effects of "the Great Depression" (which had begun in 1873), and the government of the day was falling apart. The negotiations broke down on financial terms. One later commentator estimated that for a mere hundred thousand dollars the chances of union had been botched. But if union had been consummated in 1895 it is unlikely that it would have enjoyed much popular support in Newfoundland.

As times improved, the issue again became a dead letter. Speaking at Toronto on December 8, 1913 on the theme *Why Newfoundland has not entered Confederation*, Hon. P. T. McGrath, a leading Newfoundland journalist, said: "It is difficult to see where any advantage could accrue from union. Moreover, every element amongst us sees in confederation a menace to its individual betterment." That was at the height of the pre-war prosperity. Twenty years later, at the depth of the terrible depression of the 1930's, most Newfoundlanders were still sceptical about the advantages of closer union with Canada. Members of the

¹ In 1865 there was sufficient tolerance of the idea of confederation to enable the 'Confederation' party headed by Carter to win the November general election, but thereafter opposition to union, particularly in the legislature, led to a cautious non-committal policy.



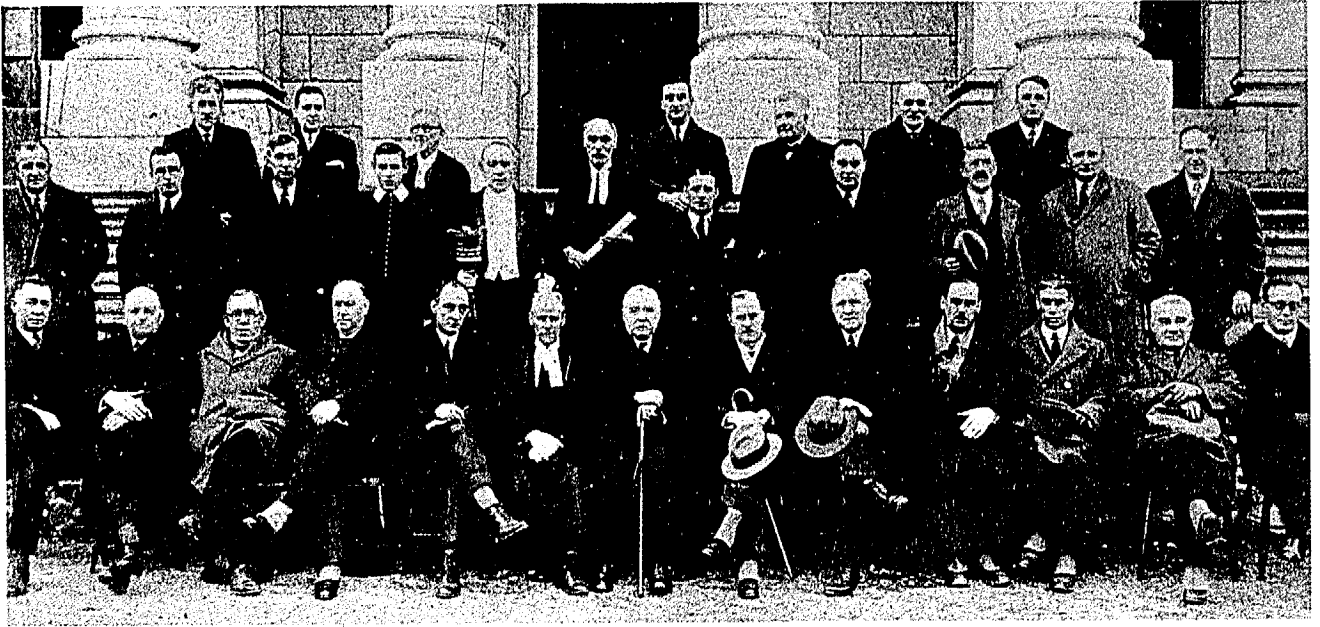
Montreal Standard

House of Assembly, St. John's: Where Newfoundland legislature met, 1855-1934; National Convention, 1946-1948; and Provincial legislature, 1949-1960.

Amulree Royal Commission in 1933 wrote, in their report: "The people of Newfoundland would much prefer to be masters in their own home, however poor, than to play the part of Cinderella in the Canadian mansion." In any event, in 1933 Canada was in poor shape to make an attractive offer to Newfoundland; several of Canada's provinces were facing fiscal collapse, and some critics thought that the whole federal system was on the verge of disintegration.

As late as 1943 a Canadian historian¹ was prepared to argue that Newfoundland, hard times and all, "would have been much worse off in the 1930's, as a province of Canada or as a state of the Union, than she was under Commission of Government, and probably worse off than she would have been had she

¹ S. A. Saunders



The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Last Newfoundland legislature before Commission of Government — Among members who played an active part in subsequent political events may be discerned Hon. John Puddester, Hon. Gordon F. Bradley, Hon. Edward Emerson, Hon. Harry A. Winter (4th, 5th, 9th and 11th from left, front row) and H. W. Quinton (4th from right, second row, standing).

been left entirely to her own devices." And in an essay on Newfoundland published as late as 1947, the author Ludovic Kennedy dismissed Confederation talk in this curt way: "A small clique favor union with Canada as a means to social security. But the majority of the people are too loyal to their traditions and too proud of their independence to consider the project seriously."

The union of Canada and Newfoundland was impossible so long as Canada was indifferent and Newfoundland hostile. World War II was a significant factor in changing the attitude of Canadians toward the prospect of confederation. It was said a bit cynically by more than one political leader and editorial writer that Canada began to show an interest in Newfoundland when the vast iron ore deposits of northern Labrador were discovered and when the electric power potential of the Hamilton (later Churchill) River was recognized. No doubt these were factors that later affected the Canadian attitude but, more simply, Canada certainly began to look on the Island of Newfoundland, and on Newfoundland Labrador, with new eyes when war broke out in September 1939.

On September 8, 1939, even before Canada's declaration of war, Prime Minister Mackenzie King had emphasized in the House of Commons that the safety of Canada depended on the adequate safeguarding of Canada's coastal regions "and the great avenues of approach to the heart of Canada". Newfoundland sat astride the entrance to the St. Lawrence Gulf and River. "The integrity of Newfoundland and Labrador," he added, "is essential to the security of Canada."

From September 1939 to April 1940 — the months of the so-called "phoney war" — the defence of Newfoundland was assured by the Royal Navy's control of the North Atlantic. The swift, appalling collapse, in turn, of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France in the spring of 1940, and the threatened siege and possible invasion of the United Kingdom, posed frightful new possibilities. On June 14, 1940, Ottawa sent a telegram to the Governor of Newfoundland proposing the despatch of Canadian air and ground forces to Gander. A flight of RCAF reconnaissance planes arrived at Gander on June 17, and a battalion of infantry disembarked at Botwood on June 22 en route to Gander. In the following two months the several interested countries concluded agreements which were to transform New-

foundland from a ward of Britain into an outpost of North American defence and — progressively — into an advanced naval base safeguarding the vital North American route to Britain. These agreements were (a) a defence understanding between Canada and Newfoundland, (b) the Ogdensburg Declaration by Canada and the United States and (c) the “Leased Bases Agreement” between the United States and Britain.

The strategic importance of Newfoundland was immediately recognized when the Permanent Joint Board on Defence was set up by Canada and the United States in August 1940. Its members noted that Newfoundland occupied a commanding position at the entrance to the heart of Canada, via the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes; that it lay on the direct air route between the east coast of the United States and northern Europe; and that it was the point in North America nearest to Europe. If occupied by an enemy, it would serve as an effective base for further operations against the North American continent.

The Leased Bases Agreement of 1940-41 gave the United States leaseholds (to run for 99 years) for the following: an army garrison base adjacent to St. John's (Fort Pepperrell); a naval and army base at Argentia; and an air base at Stephenville.

Early in the war the Commission of Government suggested the need for an air base adjacent to St. John's and the base at Torbay, built by Canada, was the result. It came into operation before the end of 1941.

Canada and the United States greatly expanded their Newfoundland operations in 1941-42. In addition to Torbay, Canada constructed the great Goose Bay airport; it added to the runways and housing facilities at Gander and Botwood to accommodate expanded air patrols and the accelerating ferry service. It constructed a naval base at St. John's which was fully operable by the end of 1942. The United States began construction of its bases at Argentia and Stephenville; they became available for major operations in 1943. By July 1943 there were nearly 11,000 U.S. military personnel in Newfoundland and a comparable number of Canadians made up of some 5,700 army personnel along with several thousand air force and navy personnel, the latter moving in and out as the Battle of the Atlantic progressed.

The Atlantic ferry service was operated by the Royal Air Force and, progressively, by the United States Army Air Force.

Using the facilities at Goose Bay and Gander, it began in the autumn of 1940 and was a material factor in winning World War II. It transported aircraft constructed in North America to Europe and North Africa by air. Perhaps even more important was the contribution of Newfoundland naval and air bases to victory in the Battle of the Atlantic. There can be little doubt that the strengthening of Newfoundland's defences marked a turning point in the war. Dr. G. N. Tucker, first official historian of the Royal Canadian Navy, described the rôle of St. John's in that epic struggle as follows: "The importance of St. John's as a wartime naval base can hardly be exaggerated. In simple terms it was the principal western base and turn-around port for ships (mostly Canadian) flying the white ensign. These were engaged in escorting, on the lap between Newfoundland and the British Isles, the great transatlantic convoys that formed the main pipeline through which the enormous resources and strength of North America were pumped into Europe. For the U-boats in the North Atlantic that small harbor was a hornet's nest, and the naval activities which were carried on there made an inestimable contribution towards winning the war."

When Newfoundland suddenly became such a vital factor in North American defence it was to be expected that its political status and its relations with Canada would be re-examined. Witness the remark by Canadian Senator William Duff (a native of Carbonear), in 1940, that Canada should "consider the idea of bringing Newfoundland into Confederation." In Mackenzie King's diary of the 1941 Hyde Park meeting between himself and the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, this exchange is reported: "He said to me that he thought Canada ought to take over Newfoundland . . . that would have to come when the war was over. I told him I agreed; that Newfoundland had not been brought into Confederation because it was a liability but we would have to turn it into an asset."

The six years of World War II left permanent marks and influences on both countries. World War II ended with the complete defeat of the Axis powers, but not the end of apprehension about possible future military menace. The defence of Newfoundland, as an outpost of North American defence, remained a major concern of both Canada and the United States.

Well into 1946, by no means certain that Newfoundland would ever become part of Canada, the Canadian Government

was carefully working out post-war defence arrangements to safeguard essential Canadian interests in Newfoundland. Still, the idea of confederation was there, both as a political lodestone and as a potentially handy way of resolving many defence issues. This was evident in a memorandum dated December 18, 1944 and addressed by Dr. John E. Read, Legal Adviser of the Department of External Affairs to Dr. R. A. MacKay, then Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs.¹

Dr. Read contended that — no matter what happened — Newfoundland, including Labrador, and Nova Scotia were Canada's strategic frontiers; that Canada could not be defended against a combination of land, sea and air power without them; and that Canada could not any more afford to have Labrador and the island of Newfoundland as easy advance bases for an enemy to take than the United States could afford to have Canada as a potentially defenceless base for a global aggressor. But, Dr. Read conceded, Newfoundland was no more likely to be enthusiastic about permanent Canadian defence bases on its soil than Canada was about the parallel U.S. activities in Canada's Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Dr. Read thought there was no likelihood of establishing any arrangement with Newfoundland that would last, so long as Canada was "an outsider". In other words the defence problem to the east and north would be greatly simplified if Newfoundland and Labrador were to join the federal union.

At the same time, as public statements by Canadian leaders increasingly made clear, in the five years that were to elapse before confederation took place, human and political factors also came to weigh importantly in the minds of Canadians concerned with Newfoundland. Canadian leaders were more and more attracted by the prospect of rounding Canada out geographically and adding 300,000 congenial people to its population.

Whether the experiences of the war years changed the attitude of many Newfoundlanders toward union is debatable, but war certainly speeded up return of the day when Newfoundland could look forward to a new form of government. Since

¹ Dr. Robert Alexander MacKay was appointed Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs in August, 1943 and was retained as special adviser when he returned temporarily to Dalhousie University in 1946. He was appointed Head of the Commonwealth Division in October 1947, and in that capacity continued to be responsible for Newfoundland affairs at the official level until union took place in 1949.

February 16, 1934 Newfoundland had been governed by a Commission of six appointed members, three of them Newfoundlanders, and the Governor as Chairman. The suspension of Responsible Government had come about following a request by Newfoundland to the United Kingdom for financial support in the face of inevitable bankruptcy in the depth of the depression. In a way Newfoundland became a "Dominion in suspense". But the pledge had been given by the government of the United Kingdom that "as soon as the Island's difficulties had been overcome and the country was again self-supporting, responsible government, on request from the people of Newfoundland, would be restored."

By the end of World War II the financial conditions for restoration of responsible government certainly appeared to have been met. The fiscal improvement had been impressive, since as against a cumulative budgetary *deficit* of \$18,000,000 in the six years to June 30, 1940, there was now a cumulative *surplus* for the war years of \$32,500,000. Newfoundland had even been able to lend over \$12,000,000 to the United Kingdom, interest free. The defence activities in Newfoundland territory and around her shores had quickly reduced unemployment to "comparatively small proportions" and welfare costs had fallen sharply. The war "boom" had at least doubled Newfoundland's national income. Once the submarine menace had been mastered, the world markets for Newfoundland fish had risen sharply at good prices. How long the good times would last was speculative, but at least on VJ Day the short-term prospects seemed promising.

While the war had brought employment and better times to many Newfoundlanders, as it did to many Canadians, there was a heavy toll in casualties and shipping losses. About 7,000 Newfoundland volunteers served in World War II, in the RAF, in the Royal Artillery, in the Royal Navy, and with the Canadian armed forces. They served in Germany and in the war against Japan, as well as on the seven seas and at home. A number of Newfoundland women served with Canadian women's service auxiliaries. An overseas Forestry Unit with an original strength of 3,600 men performed valuable service in the United Kingdom. Many Newfoundlanders served in the Royal Canadian Navy and in the merchant marine, and won wide renown for their superb seamanship. Nearly 900 Newfoundlanders were killed in the war, and by the time it ended 63% of the tonnage registered in Newfoundland in 1939 had gone to the bottom through enemy action.

It was no doubt a sign of Canada's increasing interest in the fate and fortune of Newfoundland that, in July of 1941, Canada's first High Commissioner was appointed. However, the new war-time involvement of the two countries in itself fully justified the step; there were plenty of matters at St. John's to discuss, many frictions to smooth out. And it was quite natural that the High Commissioner, C. J. Burchell, a native of Sydney, N.S., a graduate of Dalhousie, with a lifelong interest in Maritime affairs and in Admiralty and shipping law, should maintain a more than perfunctory interest in the current links between Canada and Newfoundland and in the political future of the Newfoundland people. Mr. Burchell's despatches to his Minister at Ottawa soon began to reflect their political feelings. Any significant change in opinion or any event throwing light on the mood of the people was likely to find its way into his reports.

So widespread was anti-confederate sentiment when Mr. Burchell began writing his despatches that it was newsworthy to find any prominent figure even privately confiding the view that the future of Newfoundland might lie with Canada. Discretion demanded that the High Commissioner lean backward even in such private conversations. It would not do even to agree warmly with any union sentiment expressed, and it would be most unwise to accept any gambit of this kind and develop the confidence.

Thus, on February 21, 1942 Mr. Burchell reports that, in an address at a Methodist College Literary Institute banquet, Cyril J. Fox, K.C. had said some kind words about Canada, though with no reference to the possibility of union. Mr. Burchell had congratulated him on his address, and Mr. Fox had then "volunteered the information that in his very strong opinion the whole future of Newfoundland must lie in confederation with Canada." Not to embarrass Mr. Fox, Mr. Burchell "merely said it was a long way off, or words to that effect."

Still, there were others of like opinion. "Mr. Justice Dunfield", Mr. Burchell reported in the same despatch, "is a very strong advocate of Confederation." And, perhaps more significantly, the Hon. P. D. H. Dunn, a British official and Commissioner for Natural Resources, at a dinner given by the High Commissioner had "started in to impress on me the desirability of Canada preparing to take Newfoundland into Confederation". To this

Mr. Burchell had made his stock answer — that it was a long way off, and that, if Canada were to accept Newfoundland into Confederation, it “meant a long headache for us”. Indeed, Mr. Burchell added, he was “not sure yet in his own mind that it would be a wise thing for Canada to do so . . . because of the many problems with which we would be faced.” Any overtures would have to come from Newfoundland, and not initially from the Canadians.

That was all right in private conversation, but even the very subject of union was still unpopular among the general public, as became clear a bit later. In May, 1942, *The Financial Post* of Toronto sent out a letter to a number of prominent Newfoundlanders to ask them what they thought about union with Canada. The officer commanding Canadian troops in Newfoundland, Major-General L. F. Page, came into Mr. Burchell's office distressed about the inquiry and urging that something be done about it — invoke censorship, perhaps? Mr. Burchell agreed that the *Post* had been unwise: “It was a great pity to have this question of confederation brought up for consideration at this time when we are in the middle of war. It can do no good and may do a serious amount of harm.”

Mr. Burchell continued, “The anti-confederate feeling here is very strong, as the people of this country have been taught by the politicians of the last sixty years to be against confederation.” The harm of *The Financial Post's* inquiry lay in that it was bound to provoke anti-Canadian feeling “and make Canadian negotiations about naval property etc., more difficult.” Only one favorable response was made to the inquiry of the Toronto financial weekly, that of Rev. Dr. Barr (a Canadian!). The *Post* did, however, make “several of the leading citizens go on record publicly and emphatically *against* confederation, and thus put them in a position from which I am sure they will never recede”, Mr. Burchell deplored. “As I stated in previous despatches, an extremely large percentage of the people of Newfoundland are against confederation, because opposition to confederation has been drilled into them from childhood.”

Even articles favorable to Canada published in the St. John's newspapers seemed untimely. Canadian-born Sir Alfred Morine was contributing such to the local press, but the net effect, Mr. Burchell felt, was “to solidify public opinion in Newfoundland against Canada and Canadians.” A bit later he observed that “the

Water Street merchants are to this day the strongest opponents of Confederation." On March 19, 1943 Mr. Burchell confessed that "after being here for a year and a half, I am afraid that I am fast becoming a stronger anti-confederate than any Newfoundlander, but I am looking at it from the Canadian end and not from the Newfoundland end." Mr. Burchell's reasoning was that Newfoundlanders in general, and the "Water Street merchants" in particular, were so opposed to confederation with Canada that the Canadian Government might be wise to abandon any thought of political union and concentrate on developing a good-neighbour policy which could evolve into some sort of mutually beneficial economic union.

Once World War II began to take a more favorable turn, as it did in 1943, Newfoundlanders resumed active public debate about their political future. On March 8, 1943 the Newfoundland Board of Trade passed a resolution calling for a Royal Commission "to determine the popular will with respect to the form self-government would take." There was, it continued, "an urgent need for some form of representative government." Labor union leaders met soon afterwards and passed a resolution opposing the Board of Trade motion. "We favor a restoration of our former constitution of Responsible Government", they said. (The point at issue was that under *representative* government fiscal aid might still be counted upon; but as a fully autonomous Dominion under *responsible* government Newfoundland would be expected to carry its own financial burdens.)

Meantime letters from Ottawa and correspondence between Ottawa and London were throwing some light on current feeling elsewhere. The disposition at Whitehall was to mark time until the end of hostilities; and until then to say as little as possible about future plans. However, on May 5, 1943 Clement Attlee announced that a "small mission", consisting of three members of the British House of Commons, would proceed to Newfoundland. It would be of an informal goodwill character; there would be no written report; on their return members would give an oral account of their impressions to the House. The members sent were C. G. (later Lord) Ammon, Sir Derrick Gunston and A. P. (later Sir Alan) Herbert. They arrived at St. John's on June 21, 1943 and returned to London at the end of August.

During this time there was an exchange of letters between Vincent Massey, Canada's High Commissioner in London, and

Norman A. Robertson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs in Ottawa. Early in 1943 Mr. Massey had been discussing the future of Newfoundland with Emrys-Evans, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Dominions Office. Emrys-Evans took the line that in due course Newfoundland would be restored to its former status. Political and financial difficulties would reappear, and the country "would find itself again in a parlous condition." The Parliamentary Under-Secretary had then asked "What is Canada's attitude to the problem?" Vincent Massey had replied that he had no idea. Since he believed that Newfoundland was not agreeable to union, the question was probably academic. Could Canada be associated with Newfoundland in any other way?, Mr. Emrys-Evans had pursued. Mr. Massey said that he had "no reason to believe that the Canadian Government would wish to assume any responsibility for Newfoundland". Massey agreed that Canadian interests were of course deeply involved, because of the future of the U.S. bases, and the defence of continental North America.

Norman Robertson did not reply to this communication for six months. Then (on July 16, 1943) he passed along to Vincent Massey reports about the stirrings of new political speculation in Newfoundland and added that, so far, Newfoundlanders still seemed unaware of the implications of the new ties and obligations which global defence would demand in the post-war world. "It would seem to be probable", he continued, "that sooner or later Newfoundland will be forced, by economic pressure, to become part of the Canadian confederation... However, the initiative must be taken by Newfoundland." Mr. Robertson then spoke of a fundamental shift of responsibility. The United Kingdom, he suggested, no longer had the same interest (quite apart from its financial capacity) in helping Newfoundland to avoid insolvency. Canada and the United States had taken over the task of strengthening Newfoundland's defences as part of a continental defence program. So "there would seem to be scant reason why the United Kingdom tax-payers should be under a perennial obligation to meet Newfoundland's budgetary deficits, which would substantially increase if there was any attempt to adopt a social security program, such as that outlined in the Beveridge and Marsh Reports."

Ottawa had begun by now to ask how its activities and establishments in Newfoundland and Labrador would be affected

by the end of war. The fact that vast deposits of iron ore and tremendous potential hydro power existed in Labrador also began to figure in appreciations. An External Affairs memorandum of August 7, 1943 notes that if union with Canada were achieved, "defence dispositions would be simplified and the development of Newfoundland resources, particularly in Labrador, would be facilitated." There would be costs, of course. Newfoundland would "bring new social and political problems of a major character. Economically, the country would probably be a burden."

In a memorandum prepared for Prime Minister Mackenzie King at about this time (August 18, 1943) Norman Robertson spelled out some personal reactions and reflections. After mentioning the Ammon "goodwill mission" he goes on: "My own feeling is that 'somehow, sometime' Newfoundland should become part of the Canadian Confederation. I think that, in the long run, both political and strategic considerations make this inevitable." But there were many difficulties. "I feel that if Newfoundland were a province of Canada it would very quickly take over as its own all the old Maritime grievances against the Canadian tariff and freight rate structures. . . .

"Newfoundland", Mr. Robertson continued, "has enjoyed three boom years — a result of a great volume of American, Canadian and United Kingdom expenditures for war purposes in the Island. Revenues have soared, despite the fact that the tax rates remain relatively low. Wages have doubled in the last two years and prices have risen proportionately, without any serious effort being made to keep them in check. Obviously, Newfoundland is in for a very sharp and difficult period of economic adjustment the moment hostilities cease."

Before Mr. Burchell left St. John's for his post as Canadian High Commissioner to South Africa (in February, 1944) he had moderated his anti-confederate feeling as recorded a few months earlier, evidently believing that, in spite of special problems, it would be possible for Newfoundland to find a comfortable place in the Canadian family. Writing to Ottawa in November, 1943, he explained part of Newfoundland's opposition to union as arising from a lack of understanding of how the federal system worked. The people didn't realize, he wrote, how many of the vital matters such as education would continue to be under their full control in the event of union. "My plan of campaign at the moment," he

added (and this is the first mention of engaging in a campaign) "is to spread as much information as I can at this point in an unobtrusive way."¹

Mr. Burchell's successor, J. Scott Macdonald, was a career diplomat who, like his predecessor, was a native of Nova Scotia. He at once began a study of Newfoundland political sentiment and provided Ottawa with a series of extensive and realistic reports on the subject. However, it was not until March 5, 1945 that he began to discern a few new stirrings more favorable to union. This at once raised the question as to the attitude he and his colleagues in Newfoundland should adopt in their official relations.

In his despatch of March 5, the Canadian High Commissioner wondered "whether it would be good policy to take an initiative." If Canada waited until the arrival of possible post-war depression and insolvency, which might drive Newfoundland to seek union as a way out, Canada herself would likely by then be in similar difficulties and Canadian public opinion would be adverse to taking on new burdens. There would be many advantages from the Canadian point of view if union could be consummated during the coming year or two rather than a decade hence, he went on. "It would, at one stroke, solve the contentious matter of post-war military and commercial rights . . . though it would, at the same time, present us with a difficult problem in dealing with the American bases on the island." He had begun to think that if really favorable terms were offered by Canada and the very real advantages were made known, "a large section of opinion would vote in favor of union." On the mode of polling Newfoundland opinion he thought union "would get a far more favorable and valuable verdict through a plebiscite of the people than we would ever get through waiting for the return of responsible government and having the matter voted on by the Assembly."

In Ottawa, Dr. MacKay and others had begun quietly to amass and analyze material which would be useful if confederation were to become a live issue. Scott Macdonald now recommended that Ottawa undertake a careful study of the effects and implications of union so that Canada would be ready if a Newfoundland

¹ Mr. Burchell favored Newfoundland joining Canada but, although he was detached from Newfoundland affairs when constitutional decisions were being taken, he is on record as being sympathetic to the restoration of responsible government to Newfoundland.

delegation should arrive. He thought it would be desirable to take steps to ensure that the United Kingdom, "in a sentimental mood", shouldn't dip down into its treasury resources to make Newfoundland fiscally independent of the advantages of union. He outlined what would be involved in "mounting a campaign in favor of union". Of course such a campaign would have to be conducted by Newfoundlanders.

A NATIONAL CONVENTION IS ELECTED

Once the war was over public interest turned to peacetime problems. The next move in the political fortunes of Newfoundland was up to Whitehall, with Ottawa as an interested spectator, a participant later on. Meantime there were general elections pending in both Britain and Canada. On June 11, 1945 the Mackenzie King Liberal government was narrowly sustained (125 seats out of 245). In July (the tallies were sealed for three weeks to count the service vote) the British Labor party under Clement Attlee decisively defeated Winston Churchill's Conservative Coalition government.

Early in September the new British Government inquired of Ottawa if Sir Alexander Clutterbuck of the Dominions Office would be welcomed for meetings at Ottawa on the future of Canada-Newfoundland relations. Scott Macdonald was asked if he could time his own proposed visit to Ottawa to coincide with these meetings.

In his response to this inquiry the Canadian High Commissioner at St. John's cited developments which called for review. How, for example, would the whole defence strategy of North America be affected by the atom bomb? Might Newfoundland have a rôle in such strategy? Canada, he recalled, had invested some \$25,000,000 to \$28,000,000 in Gander Airport, and it needed another \$10,000,000 to bring it up to post-war standards — sums quite beyond Newfoundland's resources.

His current thinking about union had switched to the view that if Canada did decide to make an effort to encourage it, action should be deferred as long as possible. The Newfoundland people must be allowed to make a free choice about their future. The oldest and in some ways most powerful argument against union in Newfoundland was the prospect of direct taxation. The appeal of union with Canada would be greatly strengthened if the program



Montreal Standard

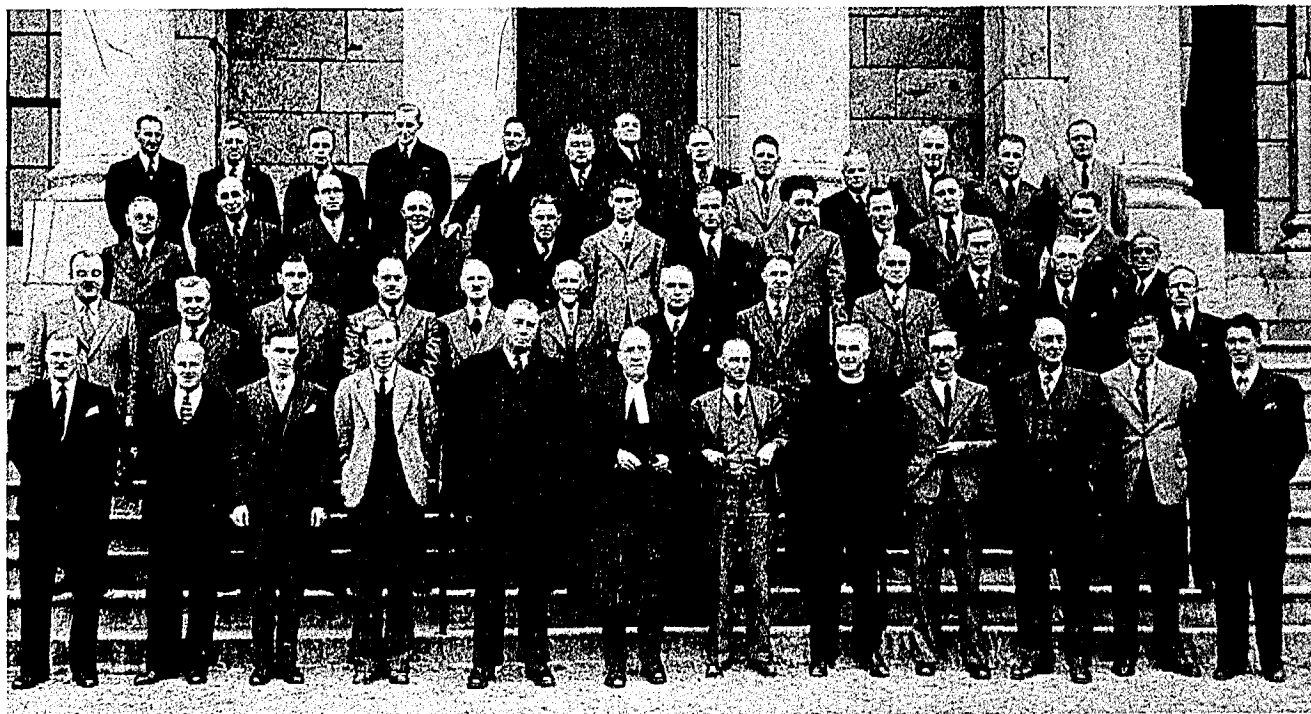
Members of Commission of Government in 1946 were, l to r, Hon. J. S. Neill,¹ Commissioner for Public Utilities; Hon. A. J. Walsh,² Commissioner for Home Affairs; Hon. Sir John Puddester,² Commissioner for Public Health and Welfare; Sir Gordon Macdonald,¹ Governor of Newfoundland and Chairman of Commission; Hon. Harry A. Winter,² Commissioner for Justice and Defence; Major the Hon. W. H. Finn,¹ Commissioner for Natural Resources; and Hon. R. L. M. James,¹ Commissioner for Finance. Standing, W. J. Carew,² Secretary.

¹ From Britain

² Newfoundlanders

of expanded social welfare services in Canada, tied up with the current Dominion-Provincial negotiations at Ottawa, were to prosper and succeed.

In his talks in Ottawa Sir Alexander Clutterbuck sought to ascertain the degree of any Canadian interest in confederation with Newfoundland; in doing so he let it be understood that if the Newfoundland National Convention — once elected — should evince interest in confederation with Canada, the British Government would encourage such a trend as long as it knew in advance that such a development would be acceptable to Canada. Some-



Members of the National Convention*

what inconsistently, Sir Alexander endeavoured at the same time to interest the Canadian Government in providing the dollar counterpart of a \$100 million development fund which the British Government was thinking of setting up in Newfoundland. The Canadian Government was generally non-committal.

Late in November, Ottawa was alerted to the impending policy announcement from London which would set in motion machinery for deciding Newfoundland's political future. A copy of the statement which the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Viscount Addison) proposed to make in the House of Lords was delivered to the Secretary of State for External Affairs at Ottawa; and on December 7 Ottawa was informed that Viscount Addison would make his statement on December 11.

In his statement Lord Addison recalled the pledge given to the Newfoundland people in 1933, "that as soon as the Island's difficulties had been overcome and the country was again self-supporting, responsible government, on request from the people

* **FRONT ROW** — Capt. Gordon Warren, Secretary of National Convention; Joseph Fowler, Port de Grave; Francis Ryan, Assistant Secretary of National Convention; Professor Wheare, Political Adviser; K. M. Brown, Bonavista South; Mr. Justice Fox, Chairman of The National Convention; J. R. Smallwood, Bonavista Centre; Rev. Lester Burry, Labrador; Alfred Watton, Fogo; Gordon Bradley, Bonavista East; Isaac Newell, White Bay; Michael Harrington, St. John's West.

SECOND ROW — C. A. Crosbie, St. John's West; Edmund C. Cranford, Trinity Centre; Charles H. Ballam, Humber; Edgar L. Hickman, St. John's East; Thomas Ashbourne, Twillingate; Hon. R. B. Job, St. John's East; Roland G. Starkes, Green Bay; Michael J. McCarthy, Port au Port; Wellington Crummey, Bay de Verde; Colin G. Jones, Harbour Grace; Albert E. Penney, Carbonear; J. Hannan, Harbour Main; A. B. Butt, St. John's West Extern.

THIRD ROW — Kenneth M. MacDonald, Grand Falls; Malcolm Hollett, Grand Falls; Reuben T. Vardy, Trinity North; Charles L. Bailey, Trinity South; John T. Spencer, Hermitage; John J. MacCormick, St. Mary's; Francis L. Ryan, Placentia West; William J. Keough, St. George's; Frank D. Fogwill, St. John's East Extern; Edmund P. Reddy, Burin East; Leonard J. Miller, Placentia East.

FOURTH ROW — Edgar Roberts, J. P., St. Barbe; Percy Figary, Burgeo West; D. I. Jackman, Bell Island; Gordon F. Higgins, St. John's East; Daniel Hillier, Burin West; William J. Banfield, Fortune Bay; Wilfred Dawe, Bay Roberts; Pierce Fudge, Humber; Archibald Northcott, Lewisporte; Frederick Goodyear, Ferryland; Peter J. Cashin, St. John's West; Samuel F. Vincent, Bonavista North; Thomas Kennedy, Harbour Main.

of Newfoundland, would be restored." In December, 1943 the coalition government of the United Kingdom had made clear that its Newfoundland policy was governed by this undertaking. The new Attlee Government "fully endorse the statement of policy made on behalf of the coalition government in 1943, and intend to proceed as speedily as possible with the setting up of appropriate machinery for this purpose."

They had consulted with the Commission of Government at St. John's, Lord Addison went on, and believed that the most suitable form of "appropriate machinery" would be an elected national convention of Newfoundlanders. The rest of his statement spelled out the detail of the plan, which was designed "to enable the people of Newfoundland to come to a free and informed decision as soon as possible on the future form of government".

The terms of reference of the proposed National Convention asked it "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".

Canada was not mentioned anywhere in the text. The statement was nevertheless headline news in Canada as well as in Newfoundland. In his autobiography, *I Chose Canada*, Joseph R. Smallwood has related in graphic detail how he got off the overnight train from Toronto to Montreal, went up to the Ford Hotel, picked up a *Montreal Gazette* of December 12 from the newsstand, saw the headline about Viscount Addison's announcement, and became so excited that he rushed through breakfast and spent hours pacing the streets of Montreal brooding over the political future of his native land. He didn't know as yet whether or not he was in favour of confederation with Canada but the announcement foreshadowed a crusade after his own heart and he was determined to be in it up to the hilt.

In St. John's there were reactions of a different sort. One reaction was that the machinery provided would enable Newfoundlanders to return promptly to Responsible Government. Another, more violent, reaction held that the United Kingdom had broken its solemn pledge to return Responsible Government forthwith if the people requested it. (Even though, so far, no such request had been made.) Those who held this view evidently felt that the original pledge, apart from the requirement for self-support, should have been unconditional.

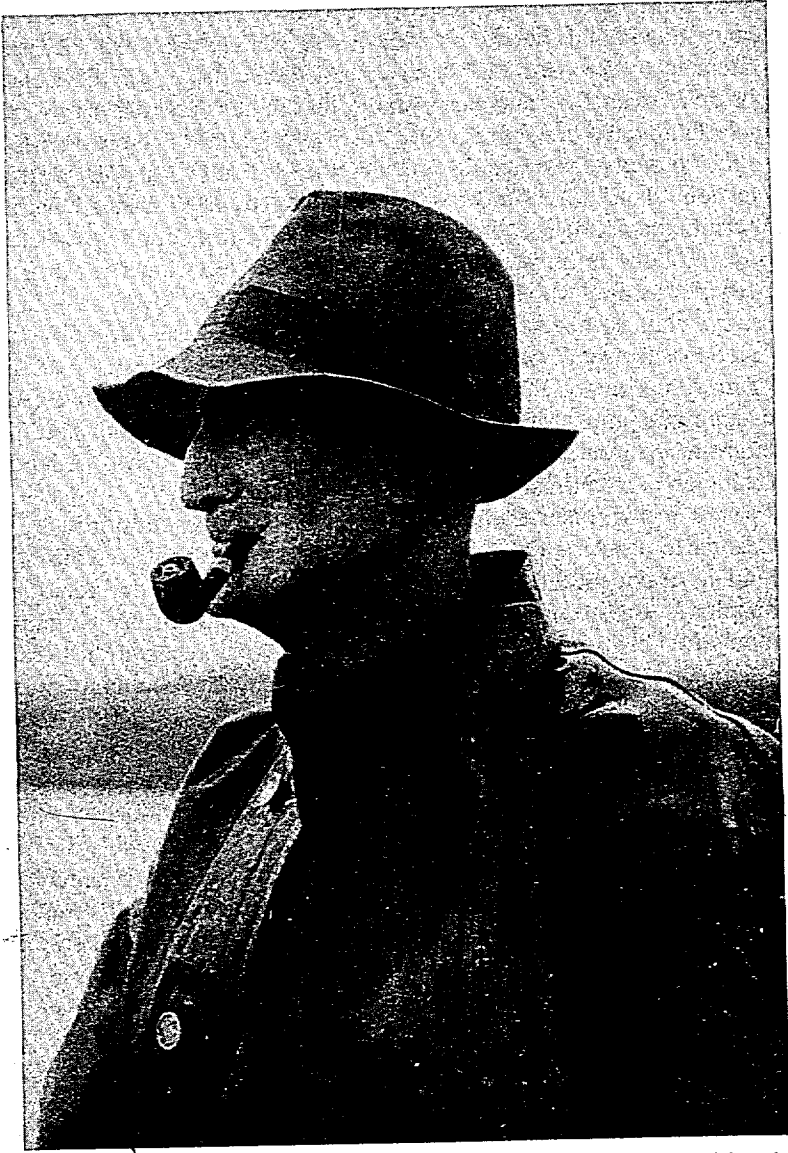
In his December 12 despatch reporting reaction in St. John's, Scott Macdonald drew attention to a sentence in the British statement to the effect that "the special difficulties of our financial position, over the next few years, may well preclude us from undertaking fresh commitments." This, Canada's High Commissioner thought, was significant. In the difficult post-war world Newfoundland was almost certainly going to need outside help. If the United Kingdom was unable or unwilling to supply it, would this set into motion forces tending to look elsewhere for help, perhaps toward Canada? But Newfoundland, he added, was currently "riding high" on a wave of post-war prosperity, and the first reaction seemed favorable to restoration of Responsible Government. One fear of those opposing union, he added, was that the dropping of immigration barriers, which would ensue from union, might result in many Newfoundlanders abandoning their own land for other parts of Canada.

A former Newfoundland Finance Minister, Major Peter Cashin, took to the radio in January, 1946 to support Newfoundland independence, charging the United Kingdom with breaking its pledge to restore Responsible Government when Newfoundland's fiscal difficulties had been overcome. (No recognition here, either, that a request from the people of Newfoundland was involved.)

A slight change in the direction of press and public discussion toward talk of union with Canada was reported by the Canadian High Commission early in 1946. At least Confederation was no longer a subject to be scrupulously avoided. As a possible straw in the wind, Scott Macdonald reported on February 28 a "mock" Convention held by the Methodist College Literary Institute. At its third session a vote had been taken on the four main types of government which had been discussed. The results were:

Confederation with Canada	80
Responsible Government	79
Commission of Government	38
Representative Government	9

The High Commissioner continued to keep Ottawa informed about public reaction to the forthcoming Convention. He mentioned "a remarkable series of letters" in the press by "Mr. J. R. Smallwood, the popular historian and journalist". He also reported an address by J. B. McEvoy, and Major Cashin's radio broadcasts. He thought that "there is little genuine sentiment in New-



Public Archives of Canada

An old fisherman



Montreal Standard

A fisherman's wife

foundland for union with Canada in the positive sense". There was, however, some growing feeling that Newfoundland would be more secure in a financial way if it were united with Canada. Watching, as he did, for every influence favorable or adverse to union, he regretted the apparent break-up of the Dominion-Provincial Conference at Ottawa. This was "a sore blow" to the hopes of those who thought that Canada's social welfare program (hinging to some extent on successful federal-provincial tax agreements) was a strong talking point for the pro-union forces in Newfoundland. The breakdown might be "a most serious setback to the advocates of confederation".

Some light on the attitude of the United Kingdom government toward Newfoundland's future was gleaned by Scott Macdonald in conversation with the newly arrived Governor of Newfoundland, Sir Gordon Macdonald. In his despatch of May 8, 1946, Canada's High Commissioner wrote in part: "[The new Governor] told me that both the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Lord Addison, had told him, confidentially, before he left, that they regarded union with Canada as the best thing that could happen to Newfoundland and would be happy if it could be brought about with the approval of a large majority of the people." He had told the new Governor "that it would require a very considerable measure of statesmanship to induce the Canadian people to accept Newfoundland, as it would cost somewhere between five and eight million dollars per annum to give Newfoundland the same general benefits and services that are enjoyed by the existing Canadian provinces."

In a despatch dated June 1, 1946 the High Commissioner's Office reported on the nomination of candidates for the National Convention in 35 of 38 districts. The vote was held on June 21. Candidates had been restricted to "bona fide" residents of each district (i.e. persons who had lived in the district for at least two years prior to nomination date, though war service was not regarded as a break in residence). The effect was to reduce somewhat the St. John's influence in the National Convention. (Most of the well-known public men in Newfoundland resided in the capital and, without the residence restriction, representation in the Convention would have unduly favored that area.)

A coming development which cast its shadow before was noted in a letter of July 15 from Scott Macdonald to Hume Wrong, then Associate Under-Secretary of State for External

Affairs. It announced that J. R. Smallwood was very anxious to visit Ottawa, to learn in detail about the sort of services that were provided by the federal government to the Maritime provinces, and thus what Newfoundland could expect if it decided to join Canada. Mr. Macdonald thought Mr. Smallwood should be given a letter to Dr. MacKay, who was in charge of Newfoundland affairs in the Department of External Affairs and who, besides, as the editor of *Newfoundland Studies*, might be likely to interest a Newfoundland writer and broadcaster on similar themes. The expectation was that Mr. Smallwood would in turn be given an introduction to Departmental officials. As things turned out, Mr. Smallwood, by his own account, chose to make most of his own appointments, and to approach Canadian Ministers directly. While Canadian officials were ready to talk to Mr. Smallwood, at the Ministerial level there was some reluctance to get involved with an aggressive promoter of confederation who was at that time acting entirely on his own initiative. It was on this visit that Mr. Smallwood first met J. W. Pickersgill and Louis St. Laurent; he found them both sympathetic.

A memorandum dated September 7, 1946 summarized a conversation that Paul Bridle (Third Secretary at St. John's) had had with the Governor. Sir Gordon Macdonald had been sampling public opinion throughout Newfoundland, and his impression was that retention of the Commission of Government, the restoration of Responsible Government, and Confederation with Canada currently stood in that order, with union thus running third and last at the time.

The sessions of the National Convention which began on September 12 were extensively reported in the press and on the air, so that the diplomatic despatches of the period yield few confidential or unpublished items.

On the day the Convention opened, J. R. Smallwood recalled later, many people were surprised to see a battery of microphones installed. He himself was "profoundly happy" to see them. Broadcasting of the sessions turned out to be an innovation of enormous consequence. Every word of the Convention's debates was heard in the farthest reaches of Newfoundland. It proved to be a long and highly influential adult education course in politics, economics, public finance and optional forms of government. J. R. Smallwood has testified to the eagerness with which Newfoundlanders in the most isolated outports as well as in the urban centres drank

in every word of the Convention proceedings and discussions. He himself, a skilled and experienced broadcaster of long standing, was able to make especially good use of these radio facilities.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee, at which the question of sending a delegation to Ottawa was raised, appears to have been held on October 2 — three weeks after the Convention first met.

On October 22, 1946 L. B. Pearson, then Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, wrote a letter to Norman Robertson, then High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom, reporting that the trend of opinion in Newfoundland still appeared to favor retention of the Commission form of government — providing, of course, that the United Kingdom would continue to look after any budgetary deficits in Newfoundland. The National Convention, Mr. Pearson went on, might ask the United Kingdom Government if Newfoundland could count on such financial help. If the reply was discouraging, the trend of opinion would change, and a greater interest would be taken in union with Canada. But he did not instruct Mr. Robertson to seek to influence the United Kingdom government in any way.

On October 29, 1946 Scott Macdonald reported to Ottawa on J. R. Smallwood's motion in the National Convention that Ottawa's attitude on the federal union of Newfoundland with Canada should be ascertained. This motion was not well received, Canada's High Commissioner reported. At the least it was premature, members felt. There was some resentment of the urgent lobbying done by Mr. Smallwood, he reported. The question was even being asked, was Mr. Smallwood a sort of "secret agent" — was he acting for the Canadian Government? In any event his motion was defeated.

On November 16 the members of the National Convention were shocked by the news that their chairman, Judge Cyril Fox, had died that day. As Canadian officials had known for a long time, Judge Fox privately favored union with Canada as Newfoundland's best solution. Fears arose among some of these officials that his successor might be anti-confederate. But the friends of union were to be agreeably surprised. Writing a few days after Judge Fox's death, Scott Macdonald reported what he called "a development of first-rate importance". This was a unanimous decision on the part of the National Convention to urge Gordon Bradley, a member of the Convention, to fill the vacated

post. Otherwise it would have been automatic that a member of Newfoundland's Supreme Court would have been asked to serve. This would take time, and there was evidently no enthusiasm in the Convention about having a judge preside, except on ceremonial occasions such as the opening and closing sessions. Mr. Bradley was "the senior member of the Convention and the only one with previous experience in parliamentary procedure". He agreed to serve "on the understanding that he would not thereby be deprived of his right as a delegate to speak and to vote".

Canada's High Commissioner saw this as a favorable development. It would ensure that Bradley would head any delegation that would proceed to Ottawa to ascertain whether a fair and equitable basis of union could be found. And if such a basis is found, "it will give him, as chairman of the delegation, a position of leadership of the confederation forces in the Convention and in the country and will put the movement for the first time on an organized basis." The High Commissioner went on to advise Ottawa that "no matter how favorable terms of union might be, they would stand little chance of being accepted unless there is a strong, well-organized and well-directed movement to present them to the people, particularly in the outports, where the majority of the electors and those most likely to be favorably disposed are located. . . . It is essential that a campaign of mass education be undertaken by those familiar with local conditions and methods and with local psychology. Herein lies the importance of a well-organized movement and Bradley is by far the best man in sight to direct it." Bradley, it seems clear, was already known in Canadian official circles as a confederate.

Committees had been set up soon after the National Convention first met. They were charged with the explicit task of examining Newfoundland's economic position and its prospects in the years ahead: was the country now "self-supporting", and was it likely to continue so? On November 25, 1946 Scott Macdonald reported that he thought that the Committee reports, by now in draft form, tended to strengthen the hand of those favoring union with Canada. They told of mining reserves becoming depleted, railway deficits looming, Gander Airport likely to need the outlay of several hundred thousand dollars a year from public funds. The costs of social welfare, public health, and education were all likely to rise substantially.

Early in December the High Commissioner was able to report to Ottawa that, the necessary legislation having been enacted, Hon. Gordon Bradley had been appointed Chairman of the National Convention. One consequence of the change was that a vacancy had occurred in the Steering Committee, and this was filled by the appointment of Joseph R. Smallwood to it.

In the same month the Governor, Sir Gordon Macdonald, told Canada's High Commissioner that the Commission of Government had just finished a three-hour discussion of the Island's finances and had reached the conclusion that Newfoundland would face a \$4 million deficit by the end of the fiscal year. (This, as later developments proved, was a somewhat pessimistic forecast).

Meantime, at Ottawa, events were pushing the Canadian Government toward a more specific public announcement about possible union with Newfoundland. It arose from the fact that a Liberal member from Nova Scotia, L. E. Baker of Yarmouth, had proposed a resolution in the House of Commons urging that, if the National Convention at St. John's desired to enter into discussions with Canada on possible terms, the Government at Ottawa should be prepared to act. In a note dated February 2, 1947 prepared for the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Hon. L. S. St. Laurent, L. B. Pearson commented that, if Mr. Baker's resolution did come up for debate, the Government "would probably not wish to oppose it, since to do so might close the door to overtures from Newfoundland."

Mr. Pearson called attention to Mackenzie King's assurance of July 12, 1943, that "if the people of Newfoundland should ever decide to enter Confederation, and should make that decision clear beyond all possibility of misunderstanding, Canada would give most sympathetic consideration to the proposal." Mr. Pearson also recalled the June 24, 1946, statement in the House of Commons by Mr. St. Laurent, as follows: "If the people of Newfoundland come to the conclusion that they would be happy to throw in their lot with Canada, their representations will be given most earnest and sympathetic consideration . . . Their delegates or representatives will be welcomed here as cordially as we can welcome them." (Mr. St. Laurent, answering a question about Labrador in the course of a debate, had noted that the people of Newfoundland had just elected a National Convention to consider their political future.)

The prevailing view of the Canadian Government had been communicated to the United Kingdom Government late in 1946. This was that the Canadian Government were desirous that Newfoundland should, in due course, enter confederation and would regret any action which might hinder the eventual accomplishment of that end, but that, in view of the delicate state of the negotiations then going on with the provinces, the Government believed that any attempt to make a firm offer of terms to a Newfoundland delegation at that time, and in any case until a greater measure of agreement had been reached with the provincial governments with respect to taxation, would prejudice the achievement of union with Canada at a later date.

JOURNEYS TO LONDON AND OTTAWA

In February, 1947 the National Convention had been in session for five months. In that time it had assembled, through its nine committees and by other means, a large body of information about the current state of the Newfoundland economy and its prospects in the years ahead. It felt that, before it could properly deal with its second major task, recommendations for a future mode of government, it needed to know where it stood in its relations with the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. A substantial body of opinion in the Convention, led by one of the most respected merchants of St. John's, the Hon. R. B. Job, believed that Newfoundland possessed a strong bargaining point in dealings with the United States, since that country might be prepared (as a *quid pro quo* for its occupation of vital defence bases) to make valuable concessions with regard to Newfoundland trade. Mr. Job moved in the National Convention, on February 4, that the Commission of Government be asked what steps could be taken to find out what the United States was prepared to do in return for the U.S. bases and for the free entry given to the United States for its importations into Newfoundland.

In order to broaden the appeal of his motion, Mr. Job agreed to add two other sections, the first asking what steps could be taken to ascertain the help that could be expected from the United Kingdom under the several possible future forms of government; and the second (paving the way for an approach to Ottawa) asking what could be done to obtain information on "What could be a fair and equitable basis for Federal Union of the Dominion of Canada

and Newfoundland, or what other fiscal, political or economic arrangements may be possible."

Mr. Job's resolution carried by thirty votes to eight.

A committee of the Convention then met the Commission of Government. On the first point, they were told that any approach to the United States would have to be made through the United Kingdom. On the other two proposals, the way to find out would be to ask the two governments concerned. The Commission of Government would be happy to make the necessary arrangements.

On February 28 the National Convention passed two motions, the first, unanimously, that a delegation be sent to London; the second, by a vote of twenty-four to sixteen, that a similar delegation go to Ottawa "to ascertain from the Government of Canada what fair and equitable basis may exist for federal union of Newfoundland and Canada". In the discussions which followed it was decided that the second delegation should not leave for Ottawa until the earlier delegation had returned from London.

On March 20 Scott Macdonald reported to Ottawa that the Governor of Newfoundland had heard from London that the United Kingdom Government was agreeable to receiving a delegation from the National Convention and was proposing April 29 as a suitable date. On the same day the Governor told Canada's High Commissioner that he was sending a communication asking if the Government of Canada would be prepared to receive a delegation from the Convention for the purpose outlined in its motion of February 28.

The Governor's message went on, "I should be most obliged if you would please ascertain whether the Canadian Government would be prepared to receive the proposed delegation and, if so, at what date."

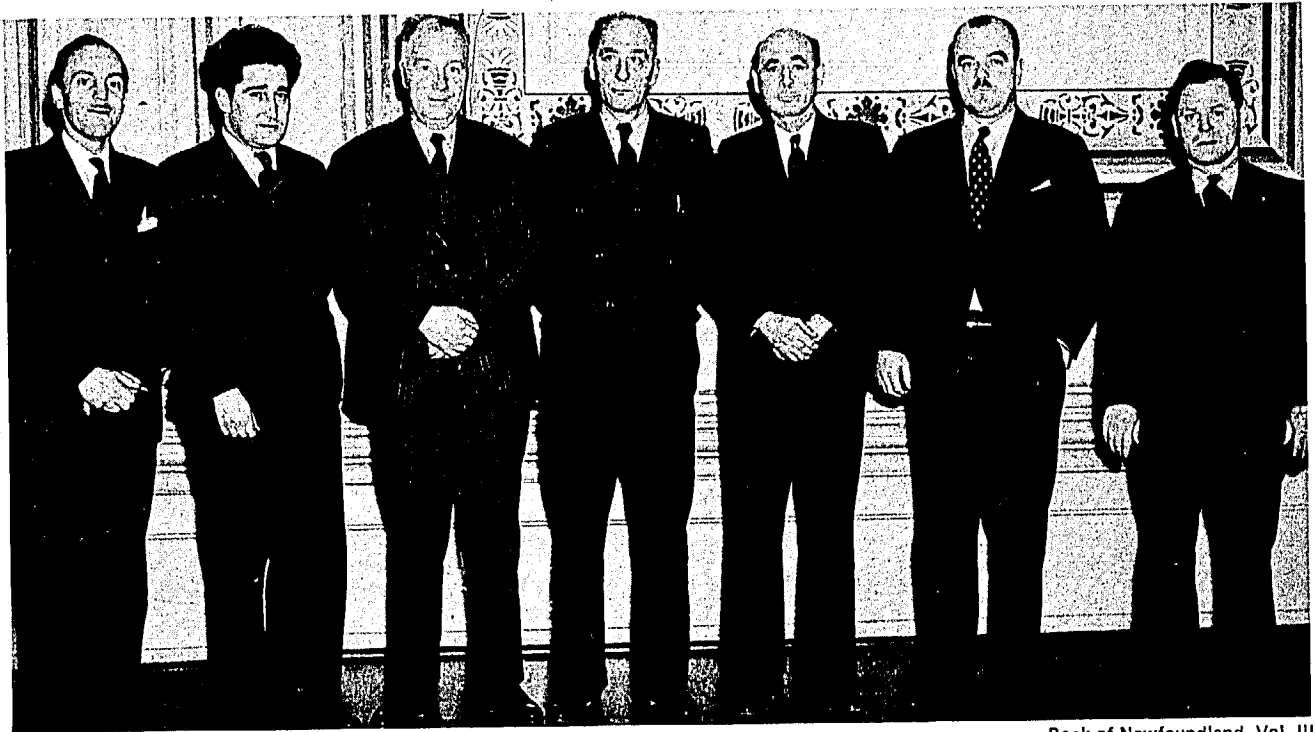
In Ottawa misgivings arose almost immediately about the propriety of a delegation from a National Convention engaging in discussions which might gradually take on the colour of formal negotiations. Yet, it was felt, it would be impolitic to emphasize in public the limitations of such a mission. In St. John's, the High Commissioner agreed that, while such a delegation could do little more than enquire and explore and report back, the effect of spelling out such limitations in public might lead the National Convention to decide that it was not worth sending.

The news that the Governor of Newfoundland and A. J. Walsh, Commissioner for Justice and Defence, were going to

London with the first delegation caused some apprehension in St. John's and Messrs Bradley and Smallwood even approached the High Commissioner and pleaded with him to bring the situation to the attention of Ottawa, hoping that Ottawa would intervene. Their fear was that the Governor and his colleague might be planning to persuade the British Government to continue the Commission form of government for five years, during which time the Governor might seek to re-vitalize the Commission of Government. Canada's High Commissioner agreed to the extent that he too felt strongly that, if the United Kingdom was prepared to extend financial aid to Newfoundland, "there would be no point in considering further the question of encouraging the country to enter the Dominion or even of permitting the question of federation to appear on the [referendum] ballot." Needless to say, however, the Canadian Government did not intervene.

However, as early as the spring of 1946 the Canadian Government had been systematically gathering information which would be useful if Newfoundland decided to approach Ottawa. An informal interdepartmental committee of officials appointed at that time was superseded in October, 1946 by a formal Interdepartmental Committee on Canada-Newfoundland Relations responsible to a special Cabinet Committee on Canada-Newfoundland Relations, set up at the same time.

The Government's attitude toward relations with Newfoundland was informally summed up in March, 1947 as willingness to receive a delegation from Newfoundland even though the Government was "not anxious to proceed with negotiations which might embarrass Dominion-Provincial relations". Timing was a delicate matter. It would be more convenient to put off such a visit until the end of the Parliamentary session. However, "any suggestion for deferral might lead to prolonged delay that would be unacceptable to the Newfoundland representatives, and might be taken by them as reluctance or virtual refusal to receive a delegation." Commenting on this, L. B. Pearson advised the Secretary of State for External Affairs that he agreed the meeting should not be postponed beyond the early part of June, "or we will run the risk of giving Newfoundland the impression that we do not wish to receive a delegation at all." In Newfoundland the National Convention was still hoping that the results of both the London and Ottawa visits might be known in time to hold the proposed referendum in the early fall of 1947.



Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Delegation of National Convention to London, May, 1947*

As the date for the departure of the London delegation approached there was debate about the agenda. One suggestion was that the United Kingdom might be asked if it would now agree to pay interest on the sums (over \$12 million) which had been advanced to Britain on an interest-free basis during the war. Scott Macdonald advised his Minister at Ottawa that this idea appalled the Newfoundland Government: "The Commission of Government, including the Newfoundland members, consider it positively indecent for Newfoundland to ask for help from Britain in her present straits. This, I may add in the strictest confidence, is also the view of the chairman of the delegation [Gordon Bradley]."

London's official reaction to the actual questions of the National Convention delegation seems to have satisfied few and alarmed many. The core of Viscount Addison's response can be quoted from his report in the House of Lords on May 16, 1947: "I told the delegation that if the people of Newfoundland, by their referendum, decide in favour of the continuation of Commission government for a further period, the United Kingdom Government would continue to be responsible for Newfoundland's financial stability. If, on the other hand, the people decided for Responsible Government, this would mean that full responsibility for Newfoundland's finances must rest with the Newfoundland Government and people, and that the responsibilities undertaken by the United Kingdom Government in 1934 would cease."

It is difficult to judge whether the concern among Responsible Government supporters caused by the refusal in the latter case was greater than the dismay spread among the supporters of union with Canada by the promise in the former case. In his first account of the reaction in Newfoundland, Scott Macdonald said that the refusal and the "brusque manner" of the delegation's reception had "caused a wave of indignation to sweep over Responsible Government circles in Newfoundland. They feel that the United Kingdom Government is deliberately making the road of Responsible Government hard to tread" and that "the concessions offered . . . are very small indeed."

* A. B. Butt, William Keough, Major Peter Cashin, Hon. Gordon Bradley, K. C., Malcolm Hollett, Chesley A. Crosbie, Pierce Fudge, (All but Keough and Bradley subsequently supported Responsible Government.)

However, the High Commissioner continued, "from the point of view of confederation with Canada, the reply of the United Kingdom is even more disquieting." The Governor had told him about the "definite agreement" by Britain that it would "continue to be responsible for Newfoundland's financial stability." The Governor interpreted this, he went on, as meaning "that they would be prepared to make any necessary development loans and to meet any deficits that may occur. If this is correct — and it seems to be a valid conclusion from the terms of the reply — *it will end any prospect of Confederation with Canada*".¹ Confederation, he added, could not be expected to compete with such an offer on any terms that Canada might regard as reasonable.

Gordon Bradley had told Scott Macdonald that the British reply was the one that he, as a pro-union man, had feared most of all. In view of the United Kingdom reply, Confederation might not even be on the ballot paper in the referendum. Bradley had told him that in such an event "he will himself take the platform in support of the Commission of Government."

Having seen the movement for union grow "from the small beginnings first outlined in my despatch of March 5, 1945 into a substantial movement," Macdonald added, "I am naturally disappointed that the answer of the United Kingdom Government should not have been more forthright on the subject of financial assistance."

In a later reflection (May 20, 1947) Canada's High Commissioner added: "With their [the Newfoundland people's] financial future thus assured for a further period without any necessity of making any irretrievable cession of their national identity, the case for the retention of the Commission of Government is very strong indeed."

Major Peter Cashin saw the British reply in quite a different light. In the same despatch Scott Macdonald reported a speech by Major Cashin in the National Convention as follows: "Major Cashin insinuated that the uncooperative attitude of the British Government was due to a desire on their part to see Newfoundland become a part of the Dominion of Canada, and alleged — without any attempt to substantiate his statement — that 'there is in operation at the present time a conspiracy to sell this country to the Dominion of Canada'." Cashin predicted that Ottawa would give the delegation from the Convention a warm welcome. Attract-

¹ Italics supplied.

tive bait, he said, "will be held out to lure our country into the Canadian mouse-trap", and he warned his listeners against "those amongst us who would take ourselves and our country on a one-way ride".

THE 1947 OTTAWA TALKS

The delegation sent by the National Convention to Ottawa in the summer of 1947 was instructed merely "to ascertain what fair and equitable basis may exist for the federal union of Canada and Newfoundland". Such a body clearly could not negotiate terms of union. It might be contended that it was only a fact-finding committee. There were nevertheless supporters of union in both Newfoundland and Canada who saw in it a means to advance the cause of union materially. There were also anti-confederates in both countries alert to this risk, and prepared to resist any such efforts. The delegation of seven members was itself divided in opinion as to the best political future for Newfoundland. The political leaders at Ottawa were also divided about the wisdom of making firm offers to a delegation from Newfoundland. On the surface, the visit of the Convention delegates to Ottawa may have appeared to be smooth and constructive throughout: but as we know now it was repeatedly threatened by ill-omened developments in both countries. Several times in its three-month stay it was in risk of falling victim to adverse circumstances, any one of which might have aborted the mission and killed all early chances of union.

The fruits of more than nine months' accumulation of data by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Canada-Newfoundland Relations and by task forces set up within agencies and Departments in Ottawa were available when the delegates arrived, and additional information was obtained in answer to specific Newfoundland questions during the sessions. The Newfoundlanders, on their part, had brought with them considerable information about Newfoundland which they thought would make it easier for the Canadian side to come up with well-informed answers to their questions.

Before the Newfoundland delegation arrived some basic Canadian policy decisions had been worked out. It was taken for granted that union with Canada would extend to Newfoundland all relevant federal services; that Newfoundland, as a Canadian province, would enjoy all the rights, privileges and responsibilities



National Film Board

Delegation from National Convention arriving in Ottawa, June, 1947*

of the other nine. But that still left many specific and sometimes thorny questions unanswered. For example, what about marriage and divorce? (Newfoundland law did not then allow divorce.) Would Newfoundland's jurisdiction over public lands be affected? Would education be disturbed? How many members, how many senators, would Newfoundland be entitled to? What agricultural services would be extended? Would Newfoundland be entitled to a National Park? What about Gander Airport? What about radio broadcasting? The National Film Board? How soon would Newfoundlanders be subject to federal income tax? What about Canada's prohibition of the manufacture and sale of oleomargarine? A major concern: how would Newfoundland's fisheries be affected? And, always a crucial matter, what subsidies and grants could Newfoundland expect after confederation?

Union with Canada would mean that Newfoundland would be relieved of expensive government services. But it also meant that the most profitable sources of revenue would be given up to the central taxing authority at Ottawa. The re-sorting of these costs and revenues invariably produced the unpleasant forecast that the revenues left to Newfoundland as a province could not possibly cover the costs remaining to it as a province. There was a serious budgetary gap in sight. It would have to be bridged by subsidies of some kind or by generous special grants. How much, and by what plan or device, were the great and chronic questions. The Quebec Conference of 1864 had nearly broken up on this matter of "bridging the fiscal gap". As was to be seen, it was also a crucial issue in 1947 and 1948.

The Ottawa talks began well. The delegates were warmly welcomed when they first set foot on Canadian soil at Sydney, N.S., and again at Montreal and at Ottawa. Prime Minister Mackenzie King arranged a dinner on the day of their arrival in Ottawa (June 24). It was held in the charming environs of the Country Club on the Aylmer Road. The guests included the Cabinet Ministers chosen to serve on the Newfoundland-Canada Committee, the leaders of the opposition, High Commissioners of Commonwealth Countries, and senior government officials.

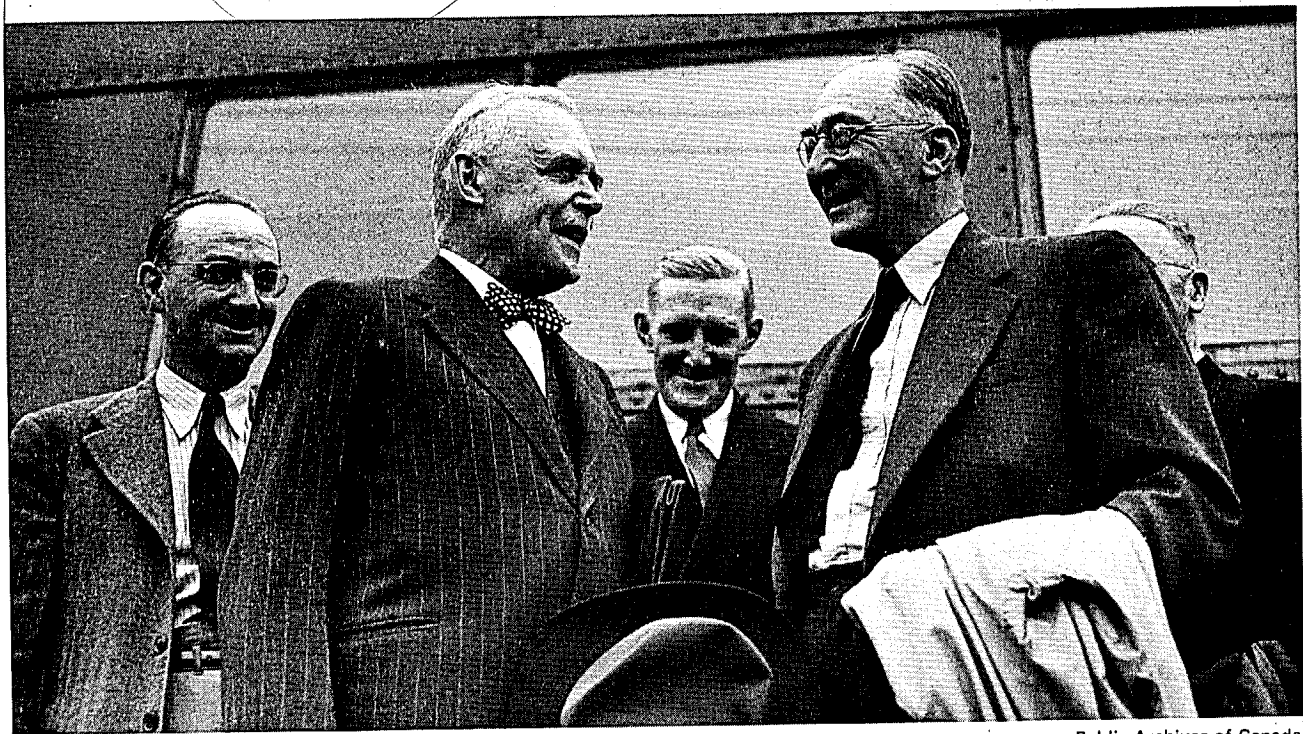
* Gordon Higgins, K. C., J. R. Smallwood, T. G. W. Ashbourne, Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, K. C., (Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs), Hon. Gordon Bradley, K. C., Rev. Lester Burry, Charles H. Ballam, Wellington Crummey. (All but Higgins and Crummey subsequently supported Confederation.)

In the early war years Mackenzie King was fond of saying in Cabinet meetings that, in conducting its defence affairs in Newfoundland, Canada must always act with the possibility in mind that Newfoundland might ultimately join Canada. Nevertheless, he confessed to his diary that when this possibility began to materialize he was less enthusiastic about receiving overtures from Newfoundland than some of his colleagues. The difficulties and problems of union were sometimes more obvious than the advantages. On March 25, 1947 he had told Mr. St. Laurent that he thought "we ought to be very careful in what was said, that we would be raising questions with the provinces as to their right as to what was to be done; also that the other parties in the House would have to be considered. We could not regard this as a party matter but [it] must be regarded as a national one . . ." He thought that relations with the provinces, then very much in the air, should be straightened out first. "Newfoundland is certain to be a great financial responsibility."

A few days before the Newfoundland delegates reached Ottawa it had been decided that the delegates should be informed that, in the event that the people of Newfoundland indicated a desire for union with Canada, the Canadian Government would be prepared to offer to the island the position of a province and to accord it the treatment accorded other provinces. It was prepared to go further and would negotiate with representatives of Newfoundland authorized to conduct such negotiations methods by which the island's government might, with assistance from Ottawa, maintain through a transitional period a reasonable standard of provincial services and balance its provincial budget. This undertaking, however, did not imply any commitment on the part of the government for *special* treatment to Newfoundland.

At the Country Club dinner Mackenzie King was much impressed by Gordon Bradley and, caught up in the historic climate of the meeting, he told the guests, in proposing a toast to Newfoundland, that he believed that some day the union of Canada and Newfoundland would come to pass. "Whether this was the moment or later, one could not say." He confided to his diary that night, "I realize that we are all at the moment writing a real page of history."

The sessions opened with a plenary meeting in the Railway Committee Room of the House of Commons the following morning at 10:30, with press and photographers invited. The New-



Public Archives of Canada

Conversation on Arrival



Public Archives of Canada

The Canadian and Newfoundland Delegations — SEATED, l to r: J. R. Smallwood, Hon. Gordon Bradley, Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, Hon. Louis St. Laurent, Hon. J. L. Ilsley (Canadian Minister of Justice). STANDING, l to r: Wellington Crummey, Rev. Lester Burry, T. G. W. Ashbourne, Hon. Douglas Abbott (Canadian Minister of Finance), Hon. J. J. McCann (Canadian Minister of National Revenue), Charles H. Ballam and Hon. Frank Bridges (Canadian Minister of Fisheries).

foundland and Canadian members were seated beneath a picture of the Fathers of Confederation. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent) suggested that Mackenzie King and Gordon Bradley, chairman of the Newfoundland delegation, be photographed in front of the picture. Mackenzie King thought that was going a bit far. The picture was too high on the wall for a successful shot anyway and Mr. King "told the photographers that Mr. St. Laurent was a man of high ideals."

Ottawa was suffering from a severe spell of heat and humidity and the chairman of the Newfoundland delegation felt it acutely. But once the ceremonies were over the members settled down to a long serious study of a hundred problems and issues. Ten sub-committees were set up and there were scores of meetings of small groups with departmental officials.

To cover all the ground needed for effective answers to Newfoundland's questions meant numerous and protracted sessions; there was a genuine need for time on the Canadian side. At first this suited the pro-union advocates very well. When they left St. John's the impression had been prevalent that the delegation would be back in a month or so with all the data needed and that in that case the National Convention could be recalled at once, the decision made as to what options should be recommended for decision on the referendum ballot, and a vote could be held late in the summer or early fall of 1947. But most pro-Confederates were afraid that union was almost certain to be badly beaten unless a massive campaign in its favour could be mounted. This would take a long time. From their viewpoint it would be much better if a referendum could be deferred until the spring of 1948.

This tendency to stretch out the Ottawa talks, perhaps unduly, was not lost on the anti-confederate members of the Convention, both in Ottawa and St. John's, nor on the opponents of union among the general public of Newfoundland.

On July 16 two members of the Newfoundland delegation, Messrs Higgins and Crummy, made inquiries through the secretariat to see if there was any way the sessions could be adjourned at once to meet again later on in the summer. Gordon Higgins had been informed by the senior partner of his St. John's law firm that parties hostile to union were warning the Ottawa delegation to "stop bartering and get on home or incur considerable wrath". Messrs Higgins and Crummy were also reported as feeling that

Messrs Smallwood and Bradley were manoeuvring to get a neat set of terms which they could then "railroad" through the Convention.

On the same day a group of Convention members at St. John's, claiming to have the support of more than half of the total Convention membership, telegraphed Gordon Bradley that it was now clear that the delegation's plans were not maturing. "It seems to many of us . . . that efforts are being made to deprive this country of any referendum this fall," the message added.

The telegram made it appear that the Governor of Newfoundland had seen and approved of the text and that he too felt that the delegation should rapidly wind up its work and return to St. John's. Governor Gordon Macdonald clarified matters with a telegram of his own on July 18, in which he said: "I see no reason why delegation should discontinue work entrusted to them by Convention. This, however, is a matter for the delegation and the National Convention itself and not for me." The Ottawa inquiry continued as before. But the discontent of the anti-confederate element at St. John's would break out again more strongly before the summer was over.

Behind the decorous scene at Ottawa there were other grave potential threats to the hopes of pro-union politicians. After the first two weeks or so the Canadian side had to reach a decision whether to give the Newfoundland delegation only an indication in general terms of what confederation would mean or whether to work out, for the information of the National Convention, the best possible basis for union in concrete proposals. By about the middle of July it was clear that the Canadian representatives in the talks were going to follow the second course.

This by no means meant plain sailing, however. In mid-July it looked as though Mr. St. Laurent had definitely made up his mind to retire from public life at an early date and return to his law practice at Quebec City. If Mr. St. Laurent had made good his determination to retire at this time, it seems evident from Mackenzie King's diary, this would have precipitated a major crisis within the Liberal party. "If you go", said Mackenzie King, in effect, "I cannot carry the burden alone: I must have a strong Quebec partner: I shall insist on leaving also." To make matters worse, J. L. Iisley, the key Maritime Minister, worn out by war-time duties as Finance Minister, was urging that he be allowed to retire to an easier life. L. B. Pearson, not yet in politics, but

even so thought of as a possible Minister, even a Prime Minister, was considering a very attractive offer made from outside Canada. When they discussed the future Mr. St. Laurent admitted to Mackenzie King: "I can see that if you leave the party, and I leave, everything will go to pieces." It was not until well on into July that Mr. St. Laurent reluctantly agreed to stay. Had he gone, it is almost certain that union between Canada and Newfoundland would have been postponed, perhaps indefinitely.

From the middle of July to mid-August the Canada-Newfoundland discussions went well. It was agreed on the Canadian side that an effort should be made to bring about union, and that negotiations with the Newfoundland delegation should continue to that end. At a plenary session of the Canadian and Newfoundland members on July 31 it appeared that the work of the sub-committees was about complete; and a key policy sub-committee, consisting of Messrs Ilsley and McCann of the Canadian Cabinet and Messrs Smallwood, Higgins and Ashbourne from Newfoundland, was set up to prepare a report on what seemed to be a "fair and workable basis for union". A statement given out to the press said that discussions had by now reached the stage where such a step could be taken. Somewhat surprisingly the press report maintained that the sub-committee was "in no sense undertaking negotiations". By August 11 a "very satisfactory meeting" of this policy sub-committee was reported; they were beginning to see light ahead; it looked as though a tentative agreement might be near. The Newfoundland delegation would be able to return to St. John's soon with proposed arrangements that might well appeal to a majority of the Newfoundland people.

All this, as it turned out, was illusory. Another major road-block had been thrown up. On August 10 a key figure in the delicate political balance on the Canadian side had suddenly died; this was Hon. Frank Bridges, Minister of Fisheries and New Brunswick member of the Cabinet. On August 14 the Canadian cabinet met; Mr. St. Laurent reported the point which discussions with the Newfoundland delegation had now reached, and listed the undertakings Canada would need to give. The Newfoundland delegation wanted to be able to announce publicly the suggested terms, as soon as possible, within two weeks at the latest. But Mackenzie King — as his diary attests — objected strongly. The death of Frank Bridges had radically altered the situation. There was no longer a New Brunswick representative in the Cabinet. A

by-election would have to be brought on at the earliest date possible. Once the proposed terms with Newfoundland were made public the different provinces would begin to take exception to them. Ottawa would be accused of offering better terms to Newfoundland than it offered to New Brunswick, for example. "We would have utter chaos in Canada, and the Government would be beaten, and we would be further away from federation with Newfoundland than ever", Mackenzie King gloomily forecast. Unless the Liberals could be perfectly sure of winning the by-election caused by Frank Bridges' death, Mackenzie King felt, "it would be much better to let the present delegation go back and tell their people that we could not agree to their terms."

This unpleasant news had to be passed along to the Newfoundland delegation. Now there was little to be done but mark time and await clarification of the New Brunswick crisis.

In the meantime, and until the Newfoundland delegation returned home at the end of September, the discussions at Ottawa entered a very desultory stage, with no assurance until the vote was taken in New Brunswick that the proposed arrangements would receive any official Canadian endorsement. By September 8 Mr. St. Laurent was being advised that members of the Newfoundland delegation were "becoming restive" and were "a little worried" about the timetable. The majority of them had "virtually nothing to do now", some were anxious about neglecting their business and occupations. Public opinion in Newfoundland was not being informed why the sessions were dragging on, and delay was beginning to run counter to the interests of union.

The High Commissioner's office at St. John's also began to hear rumours "that steps will be taken when the Convention resumes to oust Mr. Bradley from the chair and submit to vote a recommendation that the Convention's business be terminated and a referendum held immediately, calling for a straight vote on the question as to whether or not the people of Newfoundland are in favour of the restoration of Responsible Government."

Some hint of the bitterness engendered by the long delay comes out in the telegrams exchanged between St. John's and Ottawa in September.

In a telegram dated September 8 addressed to Chairman Bradley at Ottawa, twenty-one members of the National Convention reminded their colleagues at Ottawa of their earlier request (July 16) for reassembly of the Convention, and added: "Your

openly negotiating with the Canadian Government wholly unauthorized and beyond terms of reference, as you are fully aware." They drew Bradley's attention to a despatch from Quebec City, published in the Montreal *Herald* on September 5, captioned: *Quebec Hints Labrador Ours, New Map Ignores Boundaries, Privy Council Ruling Defied.*

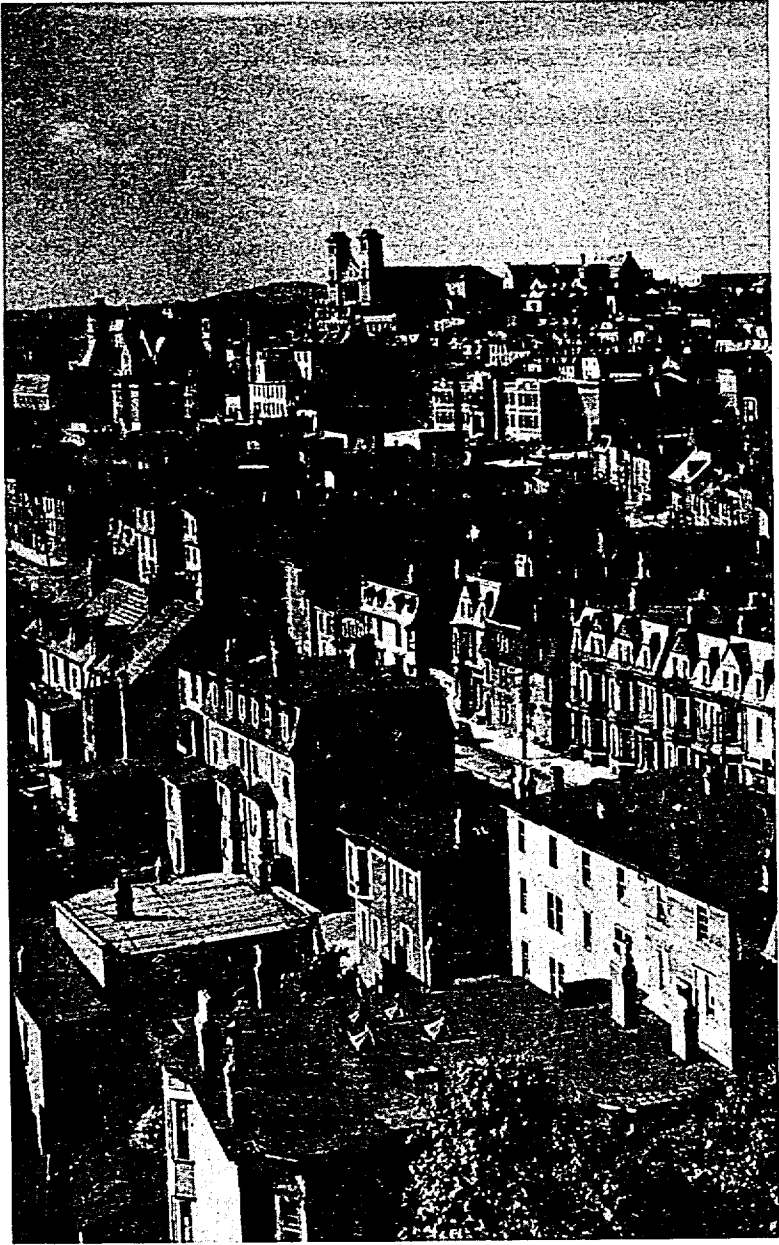
"This should indicate clearly to you antagonistic attitude toward Newfoundland of Quebec Government", the telegram continued. "In all circumstances we consider any further negotiations should cease immediately and the delegation return to Newfoundland forthwith."

Bradley's reply denied that the Ottawa delegation was exceeding the instructions of the National Convention. There was no foundation to any suggestion of Labrador not remaining with Newfoundland. "I repeat that from the beginning Labrador is an asset that Newfoundland would never consider parting with."

The dissident group in Newfoundland answered this with a second telegram, in which they developed their fears about Labrador: "As the French-speaking province of Quebec forms part of the federal union of Canada and has strong political influences on the Canadian federal government we are of the opinion this particular province is determined to do everything within its power to appropriate Newfoundland Labrador and indications are that it is their intention to take further legal proceedings against Newfoundland to try and upset decision of Privy Council 1927. Under such circumstances we feel that the federal government of Canada would be forced to discriminate against Newfoundland."

Chairman Bradley replied to this with spirit: "The attempt to drag Labrador into the picture is either the result of ignorance of the facts or else a deliberate attempt to play party politics for their own ends." He branded attempts to "wreck the delegation's work" as being such that they "may turn out to be nothing short of national treachery."

Despite Chairman Bradley's bold front, the Newfoundland delegation at Ottawa was in a serious "bind". If they returned to St. John's, it would have to be, at this stage, quite empty-handed. The sessions of the National Convention would have to be resumed forthwith and the Confederate supporters would be left defenceless. But to stay on at Ottawa, with little or nothing to do, exposed them to the full spate of criticism as expressed in the July and September telegrams.



Montreal Standard

St. John's in the morning, 1946

Newfoundland's uneasiness about Labrador was not allayed by an article in the September issue of the Quebec magazine *Relations*, which was read in full over the radio to Newfoundland listeners. It urged Quebec's claims to the Labrador interior. At Ottawa, on September 15, a Minute was formally recorded at one of the Canada-Newfoundland sessions, as follows: "The Canadian Government accepted without reservation the existing situation with respect to Labrador." Rumors of an impending survey in Labrador were explained as referring to a plan solely designed to locate, on the ground, the boundary between Quebec and Labrador as defined in the Privy Council finding that awarded Labrador to Newfoundland.

THE PEOPLE WILL DECIDE

The final plenary session of the Ottawa talks was held on September 29, and the Newfoundland delegates returned home. The National Convention was recalled for October 10. The delegates had told the Canadian Government that it would not do for them to return empty-handed. However, as Canadian Ministers had made clear, the details of Canada's "offer" could not be available until the results of the October 20 by-election caused by the death of the New Brunswick member of the Cabinet were known. As an interim measure, the summary of the Ottawa proceedings, which ran to 350 pages but which contained no "terms", was released in Ottawa and St. John's on the opening day of the National Convention.

When the sessions began that day the pent-up opposition of the anti-confederates took the form of an attempt to move a motion of censure on Chairman Bradley. This attack had been foreseen and before it could get under way the Chairman interrupted the speaker (Albert B. Butt) and read out the text of his own resignation, after which he immediately left the Chair.

The despatches from the High Commissioner's office at St. John's reported this dramatic event. Scott Macdonald talked with Gordon Bradley shortly after his resignation "and found him in confident mood, feeling that the afternoon's proceedings had definitely dispelled any desire of Newfoundlanders for return to Responsible Government so-called, and that the appointment of a new Chairman and the debate on Cashin's fiscal report would gain valuable time while the Canadian Government is further



Montreal Standard

Longshoremen looking through the Narrows, 1946

considering the question of terms." Bradley's successor as chairman, John B. McEvoy, "was regarded as well disposed towards Confederation." A memorandum prepared for Mr. St. Laurent's guidance on October 16 explained that Mr. Bradley had resigned so that he could fight the issue of union from the Convention floor.

In the weeks between the departure of the Newfoundland delegation and the New Brunswick by-election Canadian officials put the final touches on the proposed arrangements for union which had been largely worked out while the Newfoundland delegation was in Ottawa. In New Brunswick a good Liberal candidate was soon obtained (Milton Gregg), and in the election which was held on October 20 he was the winner. In these circumstances, the Premier of New Brunswick was agreeable to the proposed arrangements for union being forwarded to Newfoundland, and no objection was anticipated from Nova Scotia.

The proposed arrangements were approved on October 28, and the following day the Canadian Prime Minister forwarded them to St. John's under a covering letter to the Governor of Newfoundland. In twenty-three sections and four annexes this document spelled out what amounted to the details of a confederation offer. Newfoundland would acquire the status of a province with all its rights, powers, privileges and responsibilities. The province of Newfoundland would include the territory of Labrador, as defined by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1927. All the public services of Canada would be extended. The welfare services would include family allowances, old age pensions, pensions for the blind, unemployment insurance, sick mariners' benefits and assistance for housing. Canada would take over the Newfoundland Railway, the Newfoundland Hotel, postal and telegraph services, civil aviation, including Gander, lighthouses, aids to navigation and shipping, marine hospitals and many other expensive services, without further obligation to Newfoundland.

On the thorny fiscal issue Canada made substantial concessions (though whether they went far enough would be hotly debated). Canada would take over the Island's funded debt of about \$72,000,000. The Newfoundland budget surplus would be retained by the new province. In addition to the standard annual subsidies, there would be an annual payment of \$1,100,000, in line with special grants to the Maritime Provinces. Newfoundland would have the same chance to enter into tax rental agreements

with Ottawa as other provinces. A special "transitional grant", beginning at \$3,500,000 a year and gradually tapering off after three years, would help tide over the first difficult years. Within eight years a Royal Commission would be set up to consider whether additional special help was needed.

Newfoundland would have seven members in the House of Commons and six Senators. It would have exclusive jurisdiction over education. The manufacture and sale of oleomargarine would not be prohibited, as hitherto it had been in Canada. Newfoundland would retain full jurisdiction over its natural resources. Government employees would be offered posts in the Canadian civil service without loss of income or pensions benefits. There were many other provisions to ease the transfer and to guarantee the new province a good prospect for a smooth and efficient adjustment to a new era.

In his covering letter to the Governor of Newfoundland, Canada's Prime Minister said: "I feel I must emphasize that as far as the financial aspects of the proposed arrangement for union are concerned, the Government of Canada believes that the arrangements go as far as the Government can go under the circumstances. The Government could not readily contemplate any change in these arrangements which would impose larger financial burdens on Canada."

The document containing this offer, *Proposed Arrangements for the Entry of Newfoundland into Confederation* was tabled in the National Convention on November 6, and three stormy months of debate followed, culminating in the final session of the National Convention and its dissolution on January 30, 1948. By now there were to be found on the political scene the Responsible Government League and its sympathizers, the advocates of confederation with Canada, a New Union with America Party¹ (announced late in November and never *as such* a serious contender) and the supporters of the Commission of Government. There were also noises off-stage. The *Chicago Tribune* and its owner, Colonel McCormick, had entered the fray to save Newfoundland from "perfidious Albion". Premier Maurice Duplessis was providing the anti-union forces with ammunition by re-asserting Quebec's claims to Labrador.

¹ Not to be confused with the movement for Economic Union with the United States (see p. 56).

At home in Newfoundland the Canadian Government's proposals aroused lively comments both favourable and unfavourable. Along with editorials and articles of a thoughtful nature on both sides of the issue, which continued and mounted in number and intensity throughout the succeeding months, there was some comment of a highly controversial nature. Old suspicions of the "Canadian wolf" began to surface and the delegates who had gone to Ottawa were suspected of leading the wolf to Newfoundland's door.

As a sort of counter to the Ottawa fiscal proposals, Major Peter Cashin had tabled in the Convention the forecast of the Finance Committee that an independent Newfoundland could expect annual surpluses of about \$5 million, which could be used for capital expenditures. The \$25 million in accumulated cash surpluses of the past six or seven years could be placed in a trust fund to be used only in the event of a national emergency.

On December 8, J. R. Smallwood initiated a debate on the Ottawa proposals which stretched out until December 12, when the session was adjourned for the Christmas recess. There is an interesting impression in the High Commissioner's report to Ottawa dated December 13: "The Convention and the country have been treated for a full week to the amazing spectacle of one man without any formal position or authority, dominating by the sheer force of personality and a wide and accurate knowledge of Dominion-Provincial relations, the whole discussion . . . The value of the publicity secured for the terms by the discussions in the Convention was, however, greatly weakened by two developments in Canada, that, unfortunately, coincided with it — the adoption of the 'austerity program' involving the prohibition of the importation of motor cars, washing machines and hundreds of other commodities that can be imported into Newfoundland without restriction, and the announcement of Premier Duplessis, re-emphasizing the mineral wealth of Labrador, and that Quebec does not regard the decision of the Privy Council with respect to the boundary as final. As was to be expected, much was made of these developments."

Indeed, despite the heroic work of Messrs Smallwood and Bradley, Scott Macdonald's gloomy evaluation of the chances of union led him to write, on December 22: "If Confederation fails this time it seems highly probable that union with the United States will have a prominent place when the question of Newfoundland's

political future again comes up for consideration." Canada's untimely "austerity program" was still bothering him. On the same date he wrote to Dr. R. A. MacKay emphasizing the awkward effect it was having on Newfoundland opinion. It so happened that Newfoundland had "a very great accumulation of U.S. dollars" at the time; they were free to trade with the United States; they were bound to reflect on what would be the case if they were a province of Canada.

The fear that, if Newfoundland remained outside Canada, it would sooner or later drift into the orbit of the United States was a strong influence on the thinking of many influential persons both inside and outside government in Canada. Scott Macdonald had succinctly articulated this fear in the memorandum, written in October, 1946, which had been instrumental in having the Cabinet Committee on Canada-Newfoundland Relations set up. On the subject of Newfoundland in relation to Canada and the United States Mr. Macdonald wrote: "We cannot, indeed, rule out altogether the possibility of a more far-reaching development — political union with the United States. Such a contingency, though unlikely at the moment, could easily take on great importance if the United States Government, influenced by strategic developments, should desire a freer hand in Newfoundland and Labrador. The immense economic advantages that would flow from the free entry of fish into the United States market; the already large and prosperous Newfoundland community in the New England States which still maintains many ties with its homeland; the large proportion of persons of Irish extraction in Newfoundland's population; and the favorable impression created by lavish American spending in the Island, would give the United States powerful instruments with which to exert influence on the people of Newfoundland if it should desire to do so."

The National Convention's main task still remained to be accomplished when sessions resumed on January 5, 1948. They still had to advise the British Government on steps to be taken to ascertain the will of the Newfoundland people with regard to the future form of government. On January 19, Gordon Higgins moved that Responsible Government as it existed in 1934,¹ and Commission of Government (as it currently existed) be put on the referendum ballot paper. This motion carried unanimously on January 22.

¹ The Commission of Government had assumed office on February 16, 1934.

On the following day Mr. Smallwood moved that in addition the ballot should contain a third choice, Confederation with Canada on the basis submitted to the National Convention on November 6 by the Prime Minister of Canada. After long debate this motion was defeated by 29-16.

It had been a stormy month and the bare chronology fails to do it justice. In his despatch of January 6, Scott Macdonald had described turbulent scenes in the Convention and added: "While Mr. Smallwood has done a great deal to make the terms of union widely known and understood he is becoming much too vehement and if he continues in this fashion will do the cause of union more harm than good." On the following day Canada's High Commissioner reported that the Governor of Newfoundland had been asked to proceed to London for consultation with the Commonwealth Relations Office. The High Commissioner speculated that this might mean that the Commonwealth Relations Office "has become impatient and is contemplating some decision of its own." He had the impression that the Governor favored a referendum on only two alternatives, and that he was building up a case for retention of the Commission of Government. Mr. Macdonald reiterated his opinion that, if the United Kingdom agreed to foot the deficits during a future term of the Commission of Government, Canadian terms of union were not likely to win the favor of the majority of Newfoundland voters. Another anxiety arose over possible aid to the Newfoundland fishing industry which the Governor might be discussing in London. It had to do with the opening up of Newfoundland's dollar markets in Europe, arising out of United Nations plans to purchase fish to help with European reconstruction. "I need only point out that if the suggestion outlined above should be accepted it would electrify Newfoundland and would, of course, end all question of confederation."

By January 15 Scott Macdonald was reporting that Mr. Smallwood had "succeeded at last in adopting a much more moderate and conciliatory tone than has characterized his interventions in the past; and the general effect was most salutary."

On January 30 the National Convention was finally dissolved, with Administrator L. E. Emerson in the Chair. It seemed to many that union with Canada was now a dead issue, since the Convention's recommendation to the United Kingdom would appear to confine the choices on the ballot to Responsible Government and the continuation of Commission of Government. But

the advocates of union were not ready to admit defeat. On the day after dissolution Gordon Bradley went on the air appealing to the people of Newfoundland to demand that confederation with Canada be placed on the ballot paper along with the two choices already endorsed by the Convention.

Even the opponents of union were impressed by the public response to Bradley's appeal. The High Commissioner reported to Ottawa on February 2 that "sheaves of telegrams" were coming in. *The Evening Telegram* called the reaction "one of the most amazing outbursts of public opinion in this country's political history". What was significant about the distribution of the protests was that half of them were from areas represented by National Convention members who had voted against the Bradley-Smallwood motion for inclusion. Another surprising item was a telegram from a Roman Catholic community, with 375 signatures headed by the parish priest. Indeed, it was estimated that about a third of the telegrams were from Roman Catholic communities. This tended to offset current fears that the Roman Catholic hierarchy were, on balance, opposed to union and might even seek to "instruct" their flock in the event of a referendum carrying confederation with Canada as an option.

By February 7 Scott Macdonald was reporting signatures from 670 outposts, totalling 1,550 telegrams and representing 44,000 voters. He thought that as a result "the British Government will almost certainly feel itself obliged to include Confederation on the ballot". By February 14 the grand total was about 50,000, and Mr. Smallwood was pointing out publicly that this was 2,000 more than the total vote for the forty-five delegates to the National Convention itself.

While this was going on, the political organizations supporting the several options were gearing up for the hot campaign which would culminate in the referendum itself. On February 7 a movement for Economic Union with the United States was launched. On February 19 J. C. Britton, Acting High Commissioner for Canada, advised Ottawa of an announcement in the St. John's press that the Confederate Party, headed by Gordon Bradley and Joseph R. Smallwood, had taken over a suite of offices and that they were planning through radio and printed material to reach every corner of Newfoundland. A few days later Mr. Smallwood was quoted as announcing that the pro-union forces would start

publishing a "Union with Canada" newspaper. On March 22 it was reported that the new party for Economic Union with the United States had chosen a prominent fish exporter, Chesley A. Crosbie, as its president. On the same date the first copy of *The Independent* was issued by the Responsible Government League.

The British Government sought to obtain the views of the Canadian Government on the thorny question of whether confederation with Canada should be included in the referendum; but Mr. St. Laurent — though he had long been of the view that the confederation issue could best be settled in Newfoundland by means of a referendum — insisted that this was a question for the British Government to decide.

In fact, there was no longer much question that confederation would be included on the ballot. On March 2, 1948 the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, P. J. Noel-Baker, stated in a despatch to the Governor of Newfoundland: "His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom appreciate that there has been a feeling among some members of the Convention that the entry of Newfoundland into a Confederation with Canada should only be arranged after direct negotiations between a local responsible Government and the Canadian Government. The terms offered by the Canadian Government represent, however, the result of long discussion with a body of Newfoundlanders who were elected to the Convention, and the issues involved appear to have been sufficiently clarified to enable the people of Newfoundland to express an opinion as to whether Confederation with Canada would commend itself to them. In such circumstances and having regard to the number of members of the Convention who supported the inclusion of Confederation with Canada in the ballot paper, His Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that it would not be right that the people of Newfoundland should be deprived of an opportunity of considering the issue at the Referendum and they have, therefore, decided that Confederation with Canada should be included as a third choice on the referendum paper."

In the same despatch from London, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations spelled out the text of the questions to be put on the ballot paper in the National Referendum:

- (a) Commission of Government for a further period of five years

(b) Responsible Government as it existed in 1933 prior to the establishment of Commission of Government

(c) Confederation with Canada.

Noel-Baker's despatch further stated, "In the event of the vote being in favor of confederation, means would be provided to enable the full terms and arrangements for the constitution of Newfoundland as a Province of Canada to be discussed and settled between authorized representatives of Newfoundland and Canada."

A LIVELY POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

The fact that Confederation was to be on the ballot paper at all was hailed by J. R. Smallwood as "a victory for the people". Odd as it may seem now, the wording of (c) plunged his colleague, Gordon Bradley, into a dark mood. Canada's High Commissioner reported (on March 19, 1948) that Mr. Bradley "is greatly disappointed — indignant would be a better term — that the British Government has seen fit to place Commission of Government in such a favorable position on the ballot and to put on Confederation in ambiguous terms." Mr. Bradley felt that limiting Commission of Government to another five years arbitrarily enhanced its attractiveness¹ and that omitting any reference to the "proposed arrangements" for confederation worked out in Ottawa made the third option seem more shadow than substance.

"Mr. Bradley had even more serious misgivings about the effect of the penultimate paragraph of the despatch",² Macdonald continued. "He emphasized that confederation, even if it secures the overwhelming support of the Newfoundland people, would be quite unworkable if people in whom confederates have no confidence are chosen by the Governor (as he believes would be the case if the Governor is left to do as he pleases) to complete the arrangements and to set up the new Provincial Government. I could only tell him that the conditions under which the referendum was being held were imposed by the British Government and that Canada had no voice in the matter at all. He seemed to think that such a situation was hardly credible, but offered no comment."

¹ The time limit could plausibly be explained as recognition that Newfoundland could not go on indefinitely being governed as a virtual colony. It probably also represented a certain willingness in London to go along with the desire of the Governor, Sir Gordon Macdonald, to do a thorough job of social and economic development in Newfoundland before it took the next step in its political destiny.

² Quoted at end of previous section

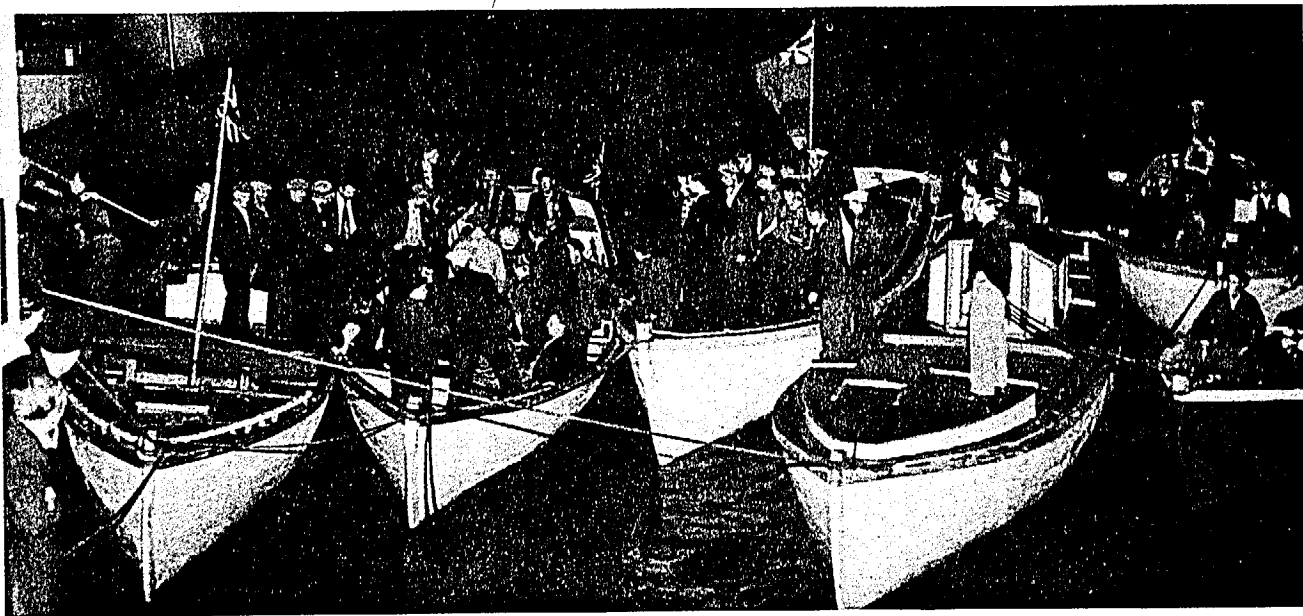
Bradley was so dissatisfied with the modalities of the referendum and with the arrangements to be made in the event Confederation won — Macdonald continued — “that he is definitely contemplating withdrawing from the contest.” Macdonald didn’t know how fully Smallwood shared these views. In any case, Macdonald continued, if Bradley withdrew, “confederation would undoubtedly find itself at the foot of the poll.” Macdonald felt that, although Smallwood was a great protagonist, he did not have the requisite prestige. He even felt that, if Bradley withdrew, “the vote for confederation would be so light that no one would feel justified in advocating it again.”

The High Commissioner’s fears about Bradley’s withdrawal proved groundless. Bradley stayed on as official leader of the Confederate movement. The date set for the vote was June 3 and the intervening weeks were turbulent and full of eloquence and fury.

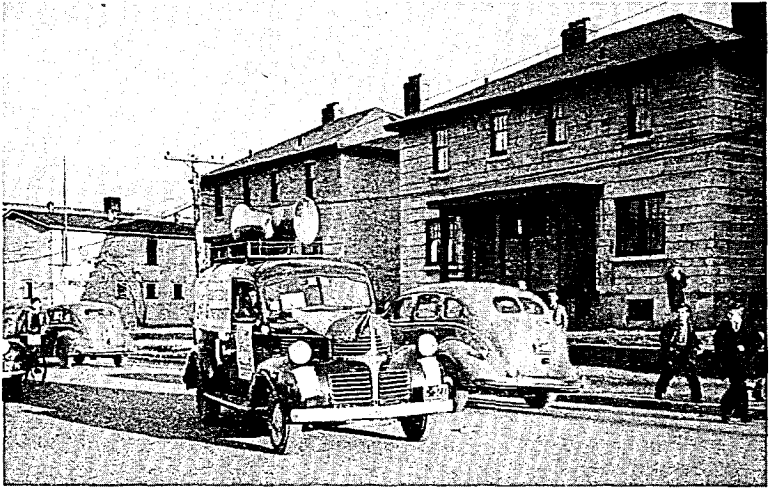
On March 24 the High Commissioner reported that the March issue of *The Monitor* (a Roman Catholic monthly journal) had criticised the inclusion of Confederation in the referendum. It called the arrangement “shocking and unfair”. It compared Confederation to a marriage arranged by parents without reference to the young couple, “conveniently [the High Commissioner commented] overlooking that the proposed system provides for the approval of the Newfoundland people”. In the same despatch Mr. Macdonald offered the opinion that the victory of Responsible Government on the ballot would end Confederation talks because, as he saw it, both political parties in the new Legislature “would be controlled by Water Street” and they would see to it that Confederation proposals were not put forward.

On the following day (March 25) the High Commissioner reported that the campaign for Economic Union with the United States had got away to a good start, with Don Jamieson¹ as Campaign Manager. It “appears to be meeting with a widespread response.” The attraction of such a union lay in the prospect of economic salvation without loss of political independence. In the context of the referendum, therefore, the movement for economic union with the United States attracted votes for Responsible Government.

¹ After union Mr. Jamieson won a seat in the House of Commons in Ottawa and is now Minister of Regional Economic Expansion in the Federal Government.



Campaigning, 1948



Newfoundland Provincial Archives

Campaigning, 1948

The name of Major Peter Cashin comes prominently into the campaign story during these weeks. He was currently telling Newfoundlanders that under Confederation they would be taxed to support two governments rather than one; and that this would be "well-nigh ruinous". A sample of his campaign eloquence was quoted by Scott Macdonald in a despatch of April 15, 1948: "Remember this", Major Cashin declared, "a vote for Confederation with Canada means: (1) Our country would be overrun with foreigners and foreign competition; (2) Every small factory and industry will close its doors and their workers [will be] left jobless; (3) Our fishermen, our loggers, our miners, all our workers will have their nets, boats, houses, everything they own, heavily taxed; (4) Our salt fish markets will be killed, thus depriving our fishermen of a living; (5) People will leave this country, especially our young people in their thousands, flying from it as from a godforsaken land to find work in the land of the strangers; (6) Our children will grow up to become conscripts in the armies of Canada; (7) Gone for ever will be our bright hopes of selling our fish to America or making an economic and trading agreement with that rich country; (8) And finally, gone forever will be all our hopes and our ambitions to live as a free people . . . On the



Propaganda, 1948

day that Confederation with Canada triumphs — on that day I tell you the soul of Newfoundland dies.”

The Confederates, for their part, pulled no punches either. Recalling that hectic spring many years later, Joseph Smallwood, the dominant propagandist for federal union, wrote: “Countless stories could be told of that campaign, for it was something the like of which Newfoundland has never seen, before or since. Feelings ran deep and bitter. Churches were split wide open, as were societies, trade unions, and families. Friendships were shattered. Each side accused the other of unspeakable crimes, and the accusations continued to be made long after the issue was settled . . . The hatred for me was, in some quarters, frightening . . .”

Early in the campaign Scott Macdonald reported that he thought the new Confederate Association (formed on March 26) was suffering from a serious lack of funds. In contrast, he considered, its opponents would be able to count on wealthy men in St. John's and on the big industrial firms.¹ He thought that the Roman Catholics, especially those of southern Irish extraction, would vote for political independence and thus for Responsible Government. However, any rumor that the Roman Catholic vote was plumping for Responsible Government might set up a backlash among the Protestants. This thought also occurred to the editors of *The Monitor*. A despatch from St. John's to Ottawa dated April 22 reports that *The Monitor* “goes out of its way to emphasize that Roman Catholic voters are completely free to vote in the forthcoming referendum as they themselves think best.” Privately, Canada's High Commissioner thought that the Roman Catholics of Newfoundland stood to gain more from Confederation than any other group “and as long as the church authorities do not take a definite stand against Confederation many of them will doubtless vote for it.”

On April 26 Scott Macdonald reported that Messrs Bradley and Smallwood were concerned about two arguments being used by the opponents of Confederation. The latter were asserting that union would end the American occupation of the defence bases, and that serious unemployment and loss of business would ensue. Smallwood thought that as many as 10,000 votes might be influenced by this consideration. The other threat was a claim that

¹ Later on it was apparently the other way about, with the Confederate Association allegedly benefiting from substantial contributions from Canadian sources, and with more money than its opponents.



Propaganda, 1948

Canadian family allowances had been only a wartime measure and might be abolished in two or three years. Messrs Bradley and Smallwood thought that statements might be made in the Canadian House of Commons to offset these rumors.¹

Shrill propaganda used in the heat of political battle should not obscure the fact that in both camps, Confederate and anti-Confederate, there was a large silent public who were weighing the issues soberly and responsibly and who went to the voting booth unswayed by the demagogic "gimmicks" on either side. The anti-Confederate forces suffered from a lack of effective coordination. There were solid propagandists of Responsible Government in the National Convention and, as time went on, in the campaign too but relatively few of the really substantial opponents of Confederation — the merchants, the businessmen generally, many lawyers and other professional men — entered the lists, perhaps because of a distaste for the rough-and-tumble of Island politics. This silent minority felt deeply that union with Canada would be a mistake.

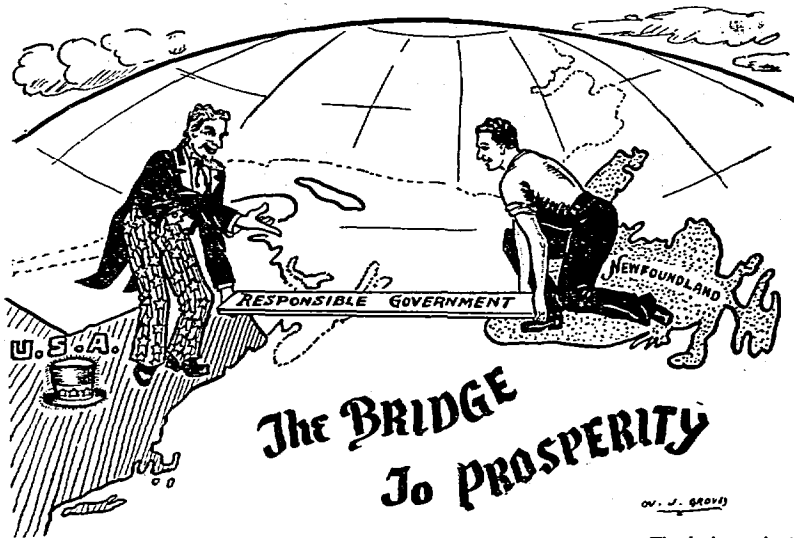
Similar considerations or the obligations of office kept some strong pro-union people silent also. As examples one could cite Sir Edward Emerson, the Chief Justice and Hon. H. A. Winter and Hon. Brian Dunfield, judges of the Supreme Court. Others who came out for Confederation later on included Albert (later Sir Albert) Walsh, Commissioner for Justice; Sir Leonard Outerbridge, a prominent businessman; Arthur Monroe, a leading fish merchant; S. W. Moores, also a prominent fish exporter and father of the present Premier of Newfoundland; Eric A. Bowring, one of the "Water Street merchants"; and Dr. Will Roberts, a leading physician.

Always sensitive to evidence of favorable or unfavorable events and trends, Scott Macdonald saw in the date set for the referendum (June 3) an adverse circumstance. It was later than had been expected; unless special arrangements for voting booths on the "bankers" were made some two thousand fishermen would be unable to vote.² However, despite the fears and alarms, and

¹ In answer to a Commons question, Mr. St. Laurent did indeed make a statement about the U.S. bases; but this was seized upon by opponents of Confederation as evidence that after union the Canadian Government would negotiate the bases away. After a report from St. John's outlined this concern, L. B. Pearson did his best at a press conference in Ottawa to reassure Newfoundlanders.

² Special voting arrangements were, in fact, made for the "bankers".

Don't Throw The Golden Opportunity Away



The Independent

Responsible Government Cartoon, 1948

through the fog of propaganda, Canada's High Commissioner was beginning to see improved chances for a substantial "union with Canada" vote. (His April 2 estimate of the vote turned out to be an accurate forecast.)

The wide and deep appeal of Economic Union with the United States was fanned by two skilful publicists, Don Jamieson and Geoffrey Stirling¹. For a time their campaign gave the Confederate forces their most anxious moments. If a vast new free U.S. market could be opened up for Newfoundland exports, political union with Canada would lose much of its appeal. But was the idea realistic? The Confederate Association sought out and exposed its weak spots.

On May 3 Scott Macdonald reported that J. B. McEvoy had just returned from the United States "convinced that economic union is not, practically speaking, obtainable". He had agreed to make broadcasts to this effect. McEvoy was a highly respected figure in Newfoundland business circles, and the Canadian High Commissioner thought that "this should have great influence on

¹ Now a major figure in Canadian broadcasting.



The Independent

Responsible Government Cartoon, 1948

the outcome of the campaign." No doubt reassured by this favorable turn, in his despatch of May 8 he reported that there was now "reasonable ground" for the view that "Confederation, barring some unforeseen development, will head the poll, and may even receive a majority over all on the first ballot." This was a sharp reversal of his bleak pessimism of six weeks earlier. He reported "something of a sensation" created by the publication in the *Evening Telegram* of documents obtained by J. B. McEvoy in the United States, which appeared to make short work of the hopes of securing economic union or free trade with that country. It seemed clear that the relations between the United States and the United Kingdom and those between the United States and Canada would firmly preclude any action likely to be objectionable to either. And besides, the Gloucester (Mass.) fishermen would mount a powerful lobby against any threat of new competition from Newfoundland or anywhere else.

On May 12, Scott Macdonald referred to the fact that he would soon be leaving St. John's for his new post in Brazil. He had been in to see the Governor, Sir Gordon Macdonald, who, he said, "while he would undoubtedly have liked to have seen the



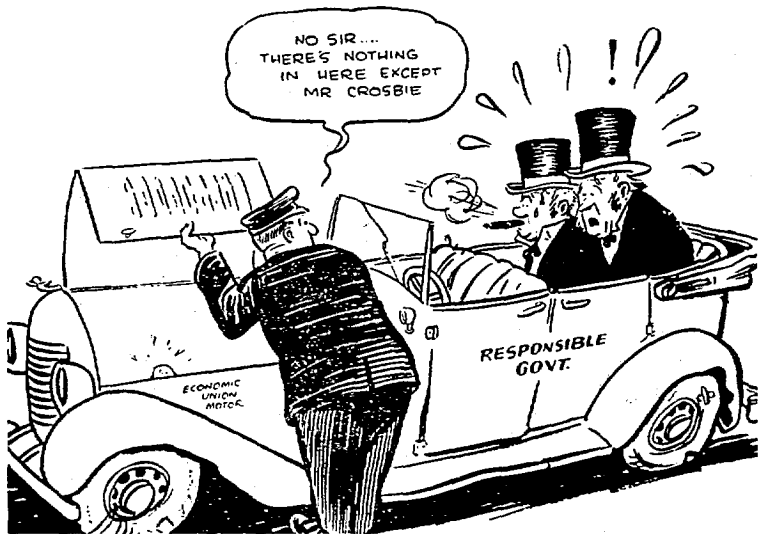
Douglas

Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Confederate Cartoon, 1948

Commission of Government continued for a further period . . . has always held the view that Confederation is the ultimate solution of Newfoundland's problems." If the vote should go in that direction, he continued, "he will, I am confident, work wholeheartedly to bring it about as smoothly as possible."

On May 15, Paul Bridle, now serving as Acting High Commissioner, reported "a recovery of confidence on the part of the supporters of economic union with the United States". There had been a surprising response from their approach to U.S. Senators, favorable to meeting a delegation from "a Responsible Newfoundland Government" to discuss economic union. Fifty senators had replied, and such influential figures as Robert Taft, Wayne Morse and Leverett Saltonstall had sent encouraging answers. Chesley Crosbie subsequently went to Washington on behalf of the Economic Union Movement.



Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Confederate Cartoon, 1948

MOMENTOUS DAYS

On the eve of the voting day the Acting High Commissioner at St. John's (Paul Bridle) cabled to his Minister at Ottawa that he felt sure "Confederation will not be eliminated in tomorrow's ballot." The idea of Confederation, he judged, "has sunk into the minds of a large number of Newfoundland people in a way which it never had before". Even if it was finally defeated in the referendum, "the cause of Confederation will die hard in this country."

June 3 was cool and cloudy and the turnout was large (88%). When the polls closed and counting began it was soon evident that there would not be a clear majority for any one of the three choices, that Commission of Government would be at the foot of the poll, and that Responsible Government was at the top. A June 4 message to Ottawa reported the vote for Responsible Government to be 69,230, for Confederation 63,110 and for Commission of Government 21,944. (The final tally¹ did not change the proportions materially.) At first, many supporters of union felt that they had gone down to defeat. "I will never forget

¹ Responsible Government 69,400, Confederation 64,066, Commission of Government 23,311.

the stricken countenances of my friends that June night as the count came in", J. R. Smallwood has recalled. "They could not understand my satisfaction." Smallwood correctly guessed that a second referendum would result in a victory for union.

In its analysis of the vote, the High Commissioner's Office at St. John's pointed out that outside of the Avalon Peninsula Confederation had received about 54% of the vote, Responsible Government 26% and Commission of Government 20%. On the Avalon Peninsula, which of course included the city of St. John's, the vote went 67% for Responsible Government, 25% for Confederation and only 8% for Commission of Government.

The date set for the second referendum (July 22) was not announced until June 14, but already speculation focussed on the sentiments of those (more than 20,000) who had voted for Commission of Government. How would they vote on the second ballot? How many would abstain from voting at all?

The despatches by Paul Bridle in this period between the two votes offer a careful analysis of the results of the first referendum, along with speculation on the prospects for Confederation in the second ballot. One explanation for the low vote registered for Commission of Government was that its members had not been in a position to campaign on its behalf. The "relatively large vote polled in favor of Responsible Government" reflected a resurgence of a desire on the part of the Newfoundland people to direct their own-affairs.

At the same time, he thought that two "rather special factors" had also boosted the Responsible Government vote. The first was the influence exerted by the Roman Catholic Church. "I have it on good authority that in various ways the Church threw its weight strongly on the side of Responsible Government." Also, it had urged everybody to get out and vote. Still, there was "no evidence of untoward moral pressure." The Roman Catholic Church's intervention was resulting in some Protestant back-lash. Another factor was the idea that restoration of Responsible Government would bring about an approach to the United States with the object of negotiating economic union; the high-powered campaign in favour of this alternative must certainly have impressed a not inconsiderable number of voters. The political influence of Chesley A. Crosbie, a genuine friend of the people,



Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Propagandist, 1948



Newfoundland Provincial Archives

Voting, 1948

was stressed. The Acting High Commissioner didn't think that either Confederation or Responsible Government would obtain a really large numerical majority in the second referendum. However, "there is genuine concern among the supporters of Responsible Government about Confederation's chances at the next poll."

Speculation about the second ballot was not confined to St. John's. There was a significant exchange in the Canadian House of Commons on June 19. In a debate on Supply (External Affairs) the Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) was questioned closely by members of the Opposition on the current voting in Newfoundland. J. G. Diefenbaker quoted a telegram he had received that day asking "if 50 per cent of total electorate or 70 per cent of vote cast would be considered sufficient on the part of the Government of Canada to warrant their accepting Newfoundland's application to join the Dominion of Canada." Mr. St. Laurent replied that he could not say anything that would be binding in that regard. But Mr. Diefenbaker pressed the matter. "Would the Minister not say it would require an almost overwhelming vote of the people of Newfoundland in order to justify Newfoundland being joined to Canada?" To this the Minister made another cautious reply: "The degree to which the consent of the population of Newfoundland would require to be expressed would have to be appraised by those



Newfoundland Provincial Archives

Scrutineering, 1948

who are responsible at the present time for Newfoundland affairs. If the government of Newfoundland, having consulted the population, represented to us that the population wished confederation to be consummated, I think we would not go behind that declaration to examine to what extent they were justified in making such a representation.”¹

A bit later, J. M. Macdonnell (Muskoka-Ontario) raised a hypothetical question. Suppose the constitutional requirements were complied with, but Canada knew that there was a strong minority — perhaps almost half the people in Newfoundland — who were opposed to union with Canada, “in the Minister’s opinion would that be a matter of indifference to us?”

“No, I do not think it would be a matter of indifference to us”, the Minister replied. “But we have made an offer to the

¹ This was no off-the-cuff reaction. Mr. St. Laurent subsequently sought to have the British Government, as the government ultimately responsible for Newfoundland affairs, pass in the first instance on the adequacy of the Newfoundland vote in favor of confederation. However, the British Government clearly felt that this was Canada’s responsibility.

constituted authorities of Newfoundland, and I do not think we could back away from that offer." He added that his own personal view was that it would be a serious responsibility to do or say anything which would prevent the entry of Newfoundland into Canada. "I do believe that the Canadian nation is destined to occupy an important place in world affairs. I do believe, further, that that place in world affairs would be better preserved by a territory which extended right out to the broad ocean and if access thereto was not closed to Canada by another sovereignty over the territories of Newfoundland and Labrador." Because of that attitude, he went on, Canada had made offers "which would involve quite costly requirements from the Canadian people at the present time. But I think we would have been remiss in our duty to future generations of Canadians not to have done so." He accepted the possibility of such a division of opinion in Newfoundland that would show the time was not ripe for union, but he hoped Canada would not have to face that. "I hope there will be a clear-cut decision in this second vote. I hope it will not be so close as to leave us in the embarrassing position of having to take in a large group of recalcitrants, or having to renounce the opportunity of completing what the fathers of confederation originally intended."

CANADA WELCOMES THE DECISION

The very respectable total vote for Confederation in the June 3 referendum and the likelihood that it would do even better on the second ballot no doubt explain the wording of a telegram dated June 24 from Ottawa to St. John's: "Robertson has been instructed to inform the United Kingdom authorities confidentially that the earliest practicable date for completion of union that can be foreseen is March 31 next." (Norman Robertson was then the Canadian High Commissioner in London.)

The campaign for the second ballot was intense and often bitter. New racial and sectarian issues were injected. Posters with the slogan, *Confederation Means British Union with French Canada*, were plastered around St. John's. Union would mean the closing of the American defence bases and the loss of thousands of jobs, it was claimed. The Canadian offer of the previous autumn was only a Liberal party proposition, by no means binding on

the Canadian people.¹ The intensity of the feeling in some quarters is illustrated by a recollection of Don Jamieson, who wrote in *The Book of Newfoundland* concerning that campaign: "Anti-Confederate feeling was so strong in St. John's that thousands would boycott any merchant rash enough to commit himself publicly to Confederation."

The Confederate supporters were troubled by a speech given by Raymond Gushue, Chairman of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, before a Medical Association dinner on July 15. Gushue said he feared that the Fisheries Board might be abandoned in the event of union. The St. John's newspapers played up his speech. Anything which might alienate or alarm fishermen would hurt the Confederate cause.

More favourable from the viewpoint of union supporters were the radio addresses of Dr. H. L. Pottle and J. B. McEvoy, made on July 16. Dr. Pottle (a Newfoundland member of the Commission of Government) said that the Government had sought the welfare of Newfoundlanders, but that, now that Commission of Government was no longer on the ballot paper, he felt free to support union with Canada.² The arrangements that would come with union would be far better fitted to continue the Commission of Government's work than a return to Responsible Government, he said. Confederation, indeed, would give Newfoundlanders "social services which they could not possibly afford under their own Government".

J. B. McEvoy's address of the same date included reassurances about the Fisheries Board which seemed an effective answer to the Gushue address. As the last chairman of the National Con-

¹ Both the Progressive Conservatives and the CCF (now NDP) were sounded out on this matter. John Bracken, National leader of the former, noted that his party had not been officially consulted, but he personally believed the offers made by the Liberal Government would be respected if his party came into power. If Newfoundland did not accept the terms, the Progressive Conservatives were prepared to discuss other offers. He ended a letter, dated June 21, 1948 with the "hope that the people of Newfoundland might find it in their interest to become associated with the Dominion." David Lewis, National Secretary of the CCF, undertook to see that the matter would be raised at the next meeting of the CCF National Executive, scheduled for June 26/27, 1948. The outcome is not reported in the records consulted but M. J. Coldwell's friendly views about union are well documented; he was Leader of the CCF at the time. By this time, as was to be expected, all three parties were assessing their potential political futures in Newfoundland, and the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives were in touch with people who later became adherents.

² H. L. Quinton, another Newfoundland Commissioner, also came out for confederation at the same time.

vention and as a prominent public man, his words carried weight. Similar optimistic views about the future of the Newfoundland fisheries came from H. B. Clyde Lake, a salt-cod exporter and former Minister of Marine and Fisheries. In a radio address of July 17 he contended that Newfoundland fishermen would greatly benefit if the Newfoundland fishing industry became a part of Canada's larger enterprise.

In support of Responsible Government, C. C. Pratt, another highly respected businessman, went on the air at the same time. Paul Bridle thought that Pratt was "probably the most thoughtful and able of the exponents of the case against Confederation on the basis of the present proposals".

J. R. Smallwood's radio address of July 20 was reported to Ottawa. Smallwood predicted that Confederation would get 30,000 more votes under the second referendum, and Responsible Government about 5,000 fewer.

Like Ottawa, London was watching developments closely. A memorandum dated July 21 reveals that the United Kingdom was already preparing a press release to be used in the event of a majority for Confederation on the second ballot — a majority "deemed adequate by the Canadian Government". On this point, United Kingdom officials were asking whether Canada had yet arrived at any decision as to the size of a majority which would be considered adequate. Ottawa was not yet ready to supply this figure. Much would depend on factors not yet known.

Early returns on July 22 were full of suspense. It looked like a close fight. When the High Commissioner's Office reported to Ottawa at 1:10 a.m. the standing was as follows: for Responsible Government, 64,890; for Confederation, 64,160. There were still about 20,000 votes to be heard from, however, many of them from the outports and from Labrador; and with the vote from the Avalon Peninsula substantially counted, the prospect for confederation looked reasonably bright. The following morning the resumed count began to turn in favour of Confederation, but it was still touch and go. What if the margin was so close that Ottawa would refuse to act? Opponents of union began to dig in and persuade themselves that Confederation could still be defeated. Many friends of union were dismayed.

How it looked at Ottawa on the morning after has been vividly recalled by J. W. Pickersgill, then Special Assistant to

the Prime Minister.¹ "When the radio reported it, I was still in bed in Ottawa. They said it was 50 — well, roughly 51 — per cent, a little over and little under 49. I went to the office early. I got hold of Gordon Robertson . . . and I said, 'I would like you to tell me the percentage of the popular vote that Mackenzie King got in every election from 1921 on . . . I knew pretty well what it would be. I knew that he had never got a clear majority in any election except one.'" Pickersgill was ready when the Prime Minister called. "He said, 'Pickersgill, what do you think of this vote in Newfoundland?' I said, 'Mr. King, it's a triumph; it's a great triumph. Overwhelming!' I said, 'Do you realize that a higher percentage of people voted for Confederation than ever voted for you? Except 1940, and it's almost exactly the same as 1940.' There was quite a long pause. And then he said, 'Is that true, Pickersgill? Have you worked that out?' I said, 'Oh, yes, I can send you the figures, Mr. King.' 'Well,' he said, 'that puts a different light on it.'"

The documents of the period illustrate the troubled state of mind of union supporters between the counting of the ballots and Ottawa's policy announcement a week later. After the second ballot the Department of External Affairs sent Dr. R. A. MacKay down to St. John's to enquire and advise. Dr. MacKay, with the assistance of the Acting High Commissioner, consulted both supporters and opponents of confederation² but it was the views of the former which, at the stage that had been reached, seemed most significant to MacKay. For example, J. B. McEvoy, a recent convert to union and a leader in the Confederate Association, expressed "great concern", saying "that he and the group who had turned out to support Confederation would be 'very badly out on a limb' should the Canadian Government turn Newfoundland down after a majority such as appeared to be in prospect."

On July 27 L. B. Pearson addressed a memorandum to his Minister, Mr. St. Laurent: "I have just been talking to Mr. MacKay over the telephone. Last night he had a discussion with some of the leaders of the Confederation party and received from

¹ In a colloquium at Memorial University, May 31, 1971, in which Messrs J. R. Smallwood and J. W. Pickersgill recalled at length the events of that summer.

² One of the opponents, Chesley Crosbie, ushered the Acting High Commissioner through a door on which black crêpe was hanging, poured him a stiff drink and said "Now tell your government to get on with it!"

them the very definite impression that a decision by the Canadian Government not to proceed with Confederation on the results of the plebiscite vote would cause great resentment and would be considered by the Confederation party as disastrous.”

On his return to Ottawa from Newfoundland Dr. MacKay amplified his telephoned report on the anxiety of the supporters of union. He said that J. B. McEvoy had felt “that if the Canadian Government were now to take any other course and demand an arbitrary number or percentage over a majority, or to say that Responsible Government should first be restored, it would be a breach of faith with the people of Newfoundland. In such an event he [McEvoy] personally would have nothing more to do with Confederation or the Canadian Government. He felt that some of his friends would feel the same way.”

Dr. MacKay's analysis of the vote suggested that neither sectarian groups nor economic classes had voted as a body, though *The Monitor* had taken a strong editorial stand against union. Dr. MacKay had been told that the Roman Catholic Church was a very large land and property owner, and that fear of change might have been a factor in their opposition to joining Canada.¹ The position taken by the Roman Catholic hierarchy had, he was told, stirred up the Orangemen, who had conducted a whispering campaign and appeared to have turned out ‘as a man’ to support Confederation.

There was general agreement, Dr. MacKay continued, that a large number of those who had voted for Responsible Government were not against Confederation as such; it was just that they had preferred to approach it through negotiations by a Responsible Government in power. The total effect of Dr. MacKay's long report and recommendations can be summarized as follows: (a) it would be a serious mistake for Canada now to hold back; (b) Confederation would now be accepted by a substantial (perhaps a great) majority of Newfoundlanders. The Responsible Government League was not, he thought, arousing really widespread interest or response.

A summary of press comment in Canadian newspapers made shortly after the referendum showed that several editors were concerned about the risk of inviting Newfoundland into the federal

¹ One change that was possibly feared was loss of its long tradition of relative autonomy, not unlike the relative autonomy, in different contexts, of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland and in Quebec.



MACKENZIE KING ACCEPTS CONFEDERATION DECISION

Newfoundland's Decision is Approved by British Press

Good Wishes for Island's Future Expressed by Daily Telegraph

LONDON, July 20.—The news that Canada is to join Newfoundland by treaty received widespread approval in the British press today. The London Daily Telegraph and Canadian Press, the "Newfoundland" "Atlantic Observer" and other "Western" papers have all expressed their approval of the decision.

The Canadian press has also expressed its approval of the decision. The Toronto Star and the Montreal Star have both expressed their approval of the decision. The Vancouver Sun and the Winnipeg Free Press have also expressed their approval of the decision.

The London Daily Telegraph has expressed its approval of the decision. It has said that the decision is a "great step towards the realization of the dream of a united Canada."

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Govt. of Britain Approves Arrangements for Union

Representative Delegation of Seven Newfoundlanders to Negotiate Terms



LONDON, July 20.—The British Government today announced its approval of the arrangements for the union of Newfoundland with Canada. A representative delegation of seven Newfoundlanders will be sent to Ottawa to negotiate the terms of the union.

The delegation will include the following members: Mr. J. A. H. Roberts, Mr. J. A. H. Roberts, Mr. J. A. H. Roberts, Mr. J. A. H. Roberts, Mr. J. A. H. Roberts, Mr. J. A. H. Roberts, and Mr. J. A. H. Roberts.

The British Government has also announced that it will provide financial assistance to the Newfoundland Government to help it meet the costs of the union.

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It is a triumph over the Newfoundland network of political intrigues, according to the London Daily Telegraph. The British Government has approved the arrangements for the union of Newfoundland with Canada. A representative delegation of seven Newfoundlanders will be sent to Ottawa to negotiate the terms of the union.

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Canadian Parliament May Ratify Nfld. Union in Fall

Ottawa Now Awaiting Arrival of Newfoundland's Delegation

OTTAWA, July 20.—The possibility of a formal union of the Canadian Parliament in the fall to ratify the agreement with Newfoundland was indicated at Ottawa tonight following the announcement of Prime Minister King's acceptance of Newfoundland's decision.

The Canadian Government is now awaiting the arrival of the Newfoundland delegation in Ottawa. The delegation will arrive in Ottawa on July 22. The Canadian Government will then begin negotiations with the Newfoundland delegation to negotiate the terms of the union.

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Britain Agrees to Canada-Nfld. Union

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Riff on Language At Danube Parley

BRUSSELS, July 20.—The Danube parley between the British and French governments today ended in a deadlock over the language to be used in the treaty. The British government insists on the use of English, while the French government insists on the use of French.

The parley was held in Brussels and was attended by British and French officials. The parley was held in Brussels and was attended by British and French officials.

St. John's Evening Telegram July 31, 1948

union since nearly half of the voters had opted for another kind of government. It was apparent, however, that some such editorial comment had been based on incomplete returns. By the time the last of the ballots had been accounted for, the majority in favor of union had reached nearly 7,000, the official final count being 78,323 for Confederation, and 71,334 for Responsible Government. The percentage for Confederation was thus 52.34 per cent. Eighteen of the twenty-five electoral districts had showed a clear majority for Confederation.

The Responsible Government League, through its secretary W. L. Collins, sent a telegram to Prime Minister Mackenzie King on July 29 asking him to receive a delegation from Newfoundland "in behalf of more than seventy-one thousand Newfoundland voters representing forty-eight per cent of those participating in the July 22 Referendum". They wanted to meet him "before any Canadian policy pronouncement was made. The purpose of the meeting would be to lay before the Canadian Government "considered views of the League in what is regarded to be the best interests of both Newfoundland and Canada". In a polite but determined refusal Canada's Prime Minister contended that "the duly constituted authorities of Newfoundland".

On the following day the Canadian Government announced its policy. A press statement was issued by Mackenzie King saying



Jubilation



Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Sorrow

that the Canadian Government "welcomes, and I believe the people of Canada also welcome, the results of the plebiscite." The Government of Canada "will be glad to receive with the least possible delay authorized representatives of Newfoundland to negotiate terms of union."

If indeed Confederation had won there was little doubt in the mind of the Acting High Commissioner at St. John's as to who had brought about the victory. In a despatch of July 24 Paul Bridle described J. R. Smallwood as "the Apostle of Confederation" adding that he "unquestionably deserves the major share of the credit for the success which it has achieved at the polls."

In a despatch to St. John's on September 8, the re-appointment of C. J. Burchell to the post of High Commissioner in Newfoundland was foreshadowed. An interesting sign of things to come also appeared on September 13 when, in response to a request from the Department of External Affairs, the Acting

High Commissioner forwarded to Ottawa a copy of the Newfoundland Coat-of-Arms, along with a description of its significance.

DRAFTING TERMS OF UNION

Exactly two weeks after the second referendum the Newfoundland Government announced the personnel of the delegation which was to go to Ottawa to negotiate the terms of union. The chairman was to be the Hon. Albert Walsh, then Vice-Chairman of the Commission of Government. A contemporary despatch from St. John's reported that this choice of a recent convert had caused a lot of heart-burning among those who had carried "the burden and heat of the day". But it was a brilliant appointment, as events proved. In a memorandum on the decision for the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. R. A. MacKay wrote (commenting on the Newfoundland "heart-burning"): "I am inclined to think it a very wise choice. Walsh is a Roman Catholic highly respected as a man and as a Commissioner. He is a tenacious negotiator but thoroughly good-tempered and well balanced, and he should have a good knowledge of governmental problems." His experience in law and government was quite exceptional. Writing many years after that autumn of negotiations, Premier Joseph R. Smallwood recited Walsh's impressive sequence of high appointments and added: "He was one of the most sure-footed men that I have ever known, and he commanded respect from all who knew him. He was a perfectly magnificent chairman of that second Ottawa delegation."

The other six members were also outstanding Newfoundlanders: J. B. McEvoy, who had been the third (and last) Chairman of the National Convention; Gordon Bradley, who had watched over the 1947 delegation's work; Smallwood himself, whose rôle was known far and wide; Philip Gruchy, manager of the Grand Falls paper mill; Gordon Winter, a leading businessman of St. John's¹; and Chesley Crosbie, the wealthy St. John's businessman who had stoutly sponsored the cause of economic union with the United States. Crosbie had accepted the assignment with a specific stipulation that he reserved the right to object (press reports said withdraw) "if I regard the terms as unsound or unfair to this Island".

¹ Now Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland.

The Canadian Cabinet Ministers chosen to negotiate with the Newfoundland delegation were headed by Louis St. Laurent, who had just succeeded Mackenzie King as Liberal Leader and was to become Prime Minister of Canada during the course of the conference. His colleagues included L. B. Pearson, the new Secretary of State for External Affairs and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Canada-Newfoundland Relations; Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence (who was to act as Vice-Chairman when Mr. Pearson was occupied with NATO business and as Chairman when Mr. St. Laurent was absent in London); the Minister of Fisheries, R. W. Mayhew; C. D. Howe, the Ministerial "boss" of Canadian trade and industrial production; Douglas Abbott, Minister of Finance; Milton Gregg, Minister of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. J. J. McCann, Minister of National Revenue.

It was a strong negotiating team, on both sides. Something remains to be said about the official advisers and the secretariat, so often glossed over in histories of government. Both sides had drawn upon a corps of authorities on Federal-Provincial relations, which was in part a heritage of the Rowell-Sirois Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations (1937-1940).

That Commission had made the most profound and exhaustive examination of Federal-Provincial relations in the history of Canada. It was one of the happy circumstances of the times that one of the senior counsel of that Commission, Louis St. Laurent, was to be Chairman of the Canadian delegation in the negotiations with Newfoundland. It was equally fortunate that one of the five members of that Commission, Dr. R. A. MacKay, was now serving as Vice-Chairman of the Interdepartmental Committee on Canada-Newfoundland Relations and as Chairman of its steering committee.¹ In addition to its own able Newfoundland staff,² the delegation from St. John's was drawing on the resources of

¹ Other Canadian officials who played important rôles included Mitchell Sharp, later Secretary of State for External Affairs but then a senior official of the Department of Finance; Alex Skelton, an economist with the Department of Trade and Commerce; George Watts and J. E. Howes of the Bank of Canada; Stewart Bates, Deputy Minister of Fisheries; and J. R. Baldwin, an Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet.

² Most senior Newfoundland advisers were officials of the Newfoundland Government and, as such, acted mainly as 'resource' people, providing information as required by the delegation before and during the Ottawa meetings but, for the most part, remaining in St. John's. Prominent among them were W. J. Carew, Secretary of the Commission of Government; Walter Marshall, Secretary for Finance; Raymond Manning, Secretary for Public Works; Gordon Howell, Secretary for Customs; and Harold Puddester, Secretary for Justice. Mr. Puddester accompanied the Newfoundland delegation of 1948 as legal adviser, and other Newfoundland officials came to Ottawa *ad hoc*.

James C. Thompson, an accountant, who had played a key role in the compilation of fiscal data on Dominion-Provincial relations for the Rowell-Sirois Commission, and on Vince C. Macdonald, one of the constitutional experts of the same Commission.

It is clear that many of the ablest and most experienced public leaders and constitutional authorities of both Canada and Newfoundland contributed to the drafting of the fifty *Terms of Union*, through which Newfoundland was to join the federal union of Canada.

The negotiations began with a formal meeting, open to the press and the public, on October 6, 1948. Delegates got down to hard work and tough bargaining on the following day. There were no fewer than twenty-one plenary sessions, not to speak of numerous committee and sub-committee sessions, drawing on departments and government agencies.

The negotiations were conducted behind closed doors, and *verbatim* records were not kept. A detailed history of these momentous talks has never been published. But it is possible to report some of the highlights. The fifty sections of the *Terms of Union* were based to some extent on the useful foundation of the "Proposed Arrangements" of the previous year. But there were many valuable extensions of, and additions to, the 1947 proposals.

Several hundred items had to be settled, and five or six issues proved especially difficult to resolve. More than once the chairman of the Newfoundland delegation let it be known he was on the eve of departing for St. John's. But patience and negotiating skill gradually overcame all obstacles, and by November 9 the thorny financial terms had been very nearly settled. On November 17 Dr. R. A. MacKay was able to write that the discussions were going very well and that "virtually all major issues have been settled, at least provisionally." That left the somewhat tedious but all-important task of drafting the exact final language of the terms. This required another three weeks, and before they were finished the draftsmen were polishing the ninth or tenth draft.

Prominent among the difficult issues were education, the fisheries, oleomargarine, divorce, the tax exemptions given by Newfoundland to certain corporations, and, perhaps the crucial issue, the fiscal or financial terms affecting such matters as subsidies, grants, rental of tax fields, assumption of the provincial debt, and provision for review of the grants in the light of the fiscal position many years ahead.

Newfoundland had a unique school system in 1948 and still has. It had grown out of the geography of the country and out of its social and ecclesiastical traditions and institutions. In all earlier discussions about union the effect of joining Canada, with its radically different educational systems, was a live issue. A glib answer might have been that education was among the matters exclusively assigned in Canada to the provinces, and that therefore Newfoundland could have any educational system it chose. This was not quite accurate. Section 93 of the *British North America Act* did, it was true, begin with the words: "In and for each province the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education..." Had it stopped there, no problem would have existed. But Section 93 went on, "subject and according to" certain provisions. These provisions were four in number and laid down specific duties and prohibitions. Since the language used was applicable to the existing provinces in 1867, but not to the circumstances in Newfoundland in 1948, this Section had caused unease among the Newfoundlanders. A satisfactory formula was found in due course, in the 1948 discussions, and the *Terms of Union* included Term 12, which substituted for Section 93 a pair of provisions which, it was believed, would guarantee Newfoundland educational institutions adequate protection against any possible adverse post-union effects. The essential elements of these terms were worked out by Mr. Walsh and Mr. St. Laurent outside the main meetings.

Fisheries had from the beginning supplied a large part of Newfoundland's wealth, income and security and it was naturally potentially alarming that in the federal system of Canada fisheries came under the jurisdiction of the central government. This topic played a large part in the discussions of 1947 and a way had then been found to meet at least a large part of the fears of Newfoundlanders. The existing Fisheries Board and the export arrangements in force were not to be disturbed for a period of at least five years, unless Newfoundland itself wanted them changed. At the same time the beneficial services already available in Canada, respecting all aspects of the fisheries, were of course to be available to Newfoundland, and were to be extended to its fishing industry.

The production of oleomargarine had been prohibited in Canada as a measure of protection for Canada's dairy industry. The *Terms of Union* provided that, unless the Legislature of

Newfoundland so desired, there were to be no restrictions on the manufacture or sale of the commodity, in the new province, except that it should not be shipped into other provinces.

There was no law of divorce in Newfoundland when the terms of union were being negotiated, and no court with jurisdiction in actions for divorce. There appeared to be no desire to introduce such facilities, either; and there was concern that by the act of union the way would be open to Newfoundlanders thereafter to seek the dissolution of a marriage by way of a Parliamentary bill (which, however, had to be passed by both Houses of Parliament at Ottawa and given Royal Assent). Union with Canada would not, of course, *require* Newfoundland to set up a provincial divorce court. While the delegates were not happy about the prospect, there was some comfort for the opponents of divorce in that, because of the ponderous and expensive nature of the procedure of seeking a divorce through a private bill at Ottawa, it was unlikely to become a common practice, even if the attitude of Newfoundlanders should meanwhile change.

One awkward matter of another kind was that the Newfoundland Government had entered into earlier agreements with certain corporations to limit income and customs levies on their operations. By Section 4 of the 27th term of union, a future provincial government was exempted from any requirement to break its earlier agreements with such firms.

There remained, along with some minor matters, the financial terms which deserve somewhat more detailed comment. It will be recalled that the 1947 "proposed arrangements" had laid down the elements of a fiscal offer, consisting of assumption by Canada of the Island's funded debt; the traditional subsidies as worked out for all the provinces from 1867 on; a special grant of \$1,100,000 a year to bring Newfoundland into line with the Maritime Provinces; a tax agreement (under which Newfoundland would rent out certain tax fields in exchange for substantial annual sums); and, finally, a series of transitional grants, beginning at \$3,500,000 a year for three years and tapering off to \$350,000 in the twelfth year. There was also in the 1947 arrangements provision for a review (within eight years) of the new province's fiscal position. Attached to the package of offers was the somewhat chilly warning by Canada's Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, that they constituted just about the limit of what Canada was prepared to offer at the time. The language used was, however, as events proved, not quite as

inflexible as it seemed. "The Government", Mackenzie King had written, "could not readily contemplate any change in these arrangements which would impose *larger financial burdens*¹ on Canada."

Some weeks before the 1948 talks began, the bearing of this declaration on the forthcoming discussions began to trouble Dr. R. A. MacKay. In a memorandum of September 30, addressed to the Acting Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, he wrote: "I feel very strongly that it is important that a wide latitude should be given the Newfoundland delegation in raising whatever questions they wish. There is possibly some danger that the Cabinet Committee will stand firmly on the statement in the Prime Minister's letter of October 29th last [quoted in part above]." Dr. MacKay then went on to recommend adjustments in the fiscal arrangements now being proposed which would make the offer more attractive to the Newfoundland delegation and thus make union more likely.

It appears that the delegates came to grips with the vital issue of "fiscal gap" early in November, 1948. In the previous year, annual transitional grants, beginning at \$3,500,000 a year, had been suggested as a means of bridging the short-fall between the provincial revenues left to Newfoundland after union and prospective provincial expenditures. By now the fiscal estimates for Newfoundland had been re-examined, and they indicated a much more serious gap of several million dollars more a year, in all likelihood. In the first two weeks of November much time and effort was spent casting about for ways to bridge this widened financial fissure.

One suggestion which was explored, though not with any enthusiasm by the Newfoundland delegation, was some way in which the new province could raise several millions a year by added taxation. A sales tax of 5% was bruted; it might bring in as much as \$3,500,000 annually. Possibly in the light of their intense dislike of direct taxation, Newfoundlanders might — it was suggested — be given the right for several years to collect it indirectly, as a turnover tax. That would, however, contravene the *B.N.A. Act*. Another short-lived idea was that the United Kingdom might be asked to assume Newfoundland's funded debt, and that, in recognition of the reduced cost to Canada thus

¹ Italics supplied.



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Newfoundland Delegation to negotiate Terms of Union, 1948. L to r: Chesley A. Crosbie, Philip Gruchy, Hon. Albert Walsh, Hon. Gordon Bradley, J. R. Smallwood, Gordon Winter. ABSENT: J. B. McEvoy.



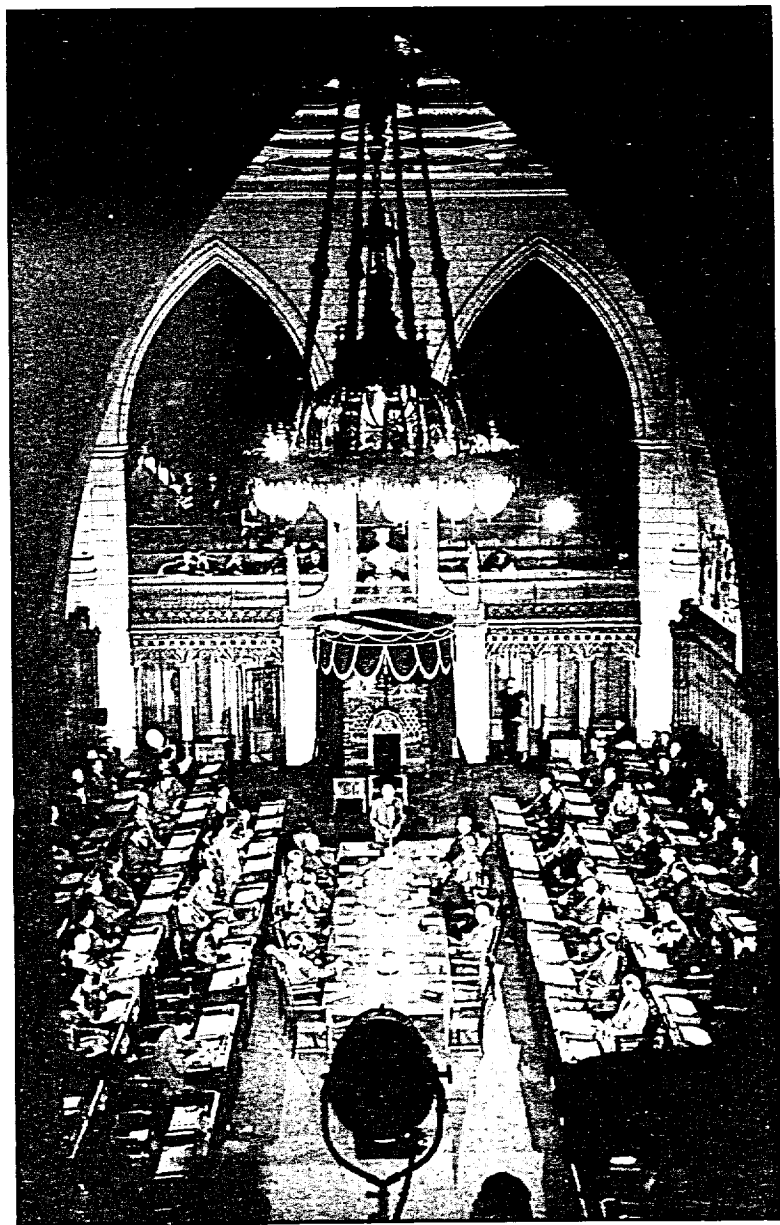
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Responsible Government League mission to London, November, 1948. L to r: John G. Higgins, Major Peter Cashin, Major Fred Marshall.

brought about, Canada might agree to raise its annual grants to Newfoundland.

None of these ideas got very far. The logical solution, if it could be politically defended, would be for Canada to "bridge the new gap" by substantially increasing the transitional grants. On November 6 a memorandum prepared by officials was submitted to Brooke Claxton. It sought to justify a substantial enlargement of the transitional grants on the ground that the amount to be taken from Newfoundland taxpayers by the federal government after union had been considerably underestimated in 1947. If this was so, then such an increase in the transitional grants would not, in actual fact, "impose larger financial burdens on Canada". No province could complain, under these circumstances; and there was a feeling among Canadian officials — the memorandum said — that the Newfoundland delegation "would quickly settle for doubling the present transitional grants". That is, offer \$7,000,000 for each of the first three years, and then let them taper off much as in the 1947 proposals.

The Canadian delegation was not prepared to go quite that far, but it did make an offer much better than the 1947 proposals: to be exact, it suggested \$6,500,000 a year for each of the first three years, and lesser sums for the next nine, the aggregate sums



Public Archives of Canada

A view of the signing ceremony in the Senate Chamber,
Ottawa, December, 1948

under this heading reaching \$42,750,000 in 12 years, as against an aggregate offer of \$26,250,000 as made in 1947.

In addition to these projected cash grants there were some additional services and exemptions to which a cash figure could not be so easily attached. The extension of War Service Gratuities and Reestablishment Credits to Newfoundland war veterans, and the period of grace provided for Newfoundland taxpayers while the income tax was being introduced, are illustrations of these added benefits.

Term 29, which was to prove such a contentious measure in later years, repeated the promise of the 1947 arrangements, that within eight years after the date of union a Royal Commission would be appointed to examine Newfoundland's fiscal position and prospects and make recommendations as to such additional grants and fiscal benefits as current circumstances might suggest — to enable Newfoundland to continue public services at the level reached by that time, and without resorting to taxation more burdensome than that obtaining in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island.

Six of the seven delegates from Newfoundland were sufficiently content with the terms as a whole, including the improved grants, to sign the *Terms of Union*, and the ceremony was set for December 11. Like the opening ceremony, it took place in the jewel-like Red Chamber of the Senate, still adorned by war murals of World War I, and the site of many historic events in Canada's Parliamentary past. The galleries had been opened for press and public. On the floor of the chamber sat the principals of the negotiations, as well as the former Prime Minister, W. L. Mackenzie King (who had retired on November 15) and senior officials of both governments. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board were there to capture for Canadians and Newfoundlanders (soon to be Canadians too) some impressions of the historic event.

Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent spoke first. He reviewed, for the record, what had happened since the end of World War II. "The agreement has required long and careful consideration", he said. "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 . . ."



Newton Studios

Signing the Terms of Union

"We have, it is true, had certain difficulties", he went on. "But, as D'Arcy McGee once said when talking about objections that had been raised to Confederation, 'I have never heard . . . of any state being founded or enlarged or delivered from danger, except by surmounting difficulties'".

In many ways the difficulties had been greater and more complex than those faced by the original Fathers of Confederation, Mr. St. Laurent contended. "Marriage between adults of mature years requires greater adjustment and a broader tolerance between the parties than does marriage between younger folk just starting to assume the responsibilities of life." Union would bring the peoples of Canada and of Newfoundland much closer together. "That, to my mind, will be its most important consequence."

In his reply, the Honorable A. J. Walsh, Chairman of the Newfoundland Delegation, stressed the importance of the financial provisions. In signing the terms of union, the Newfoundland delegates did 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", he continued, "is one of great historic significance . . . This occasion marks a necessary and important step toward the final realization of the vision of the Fathers of Confederation, who saw a great 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 31 next."

On the Clerk's table where the document in duplicate lay for the ceremonial signatures there was a unique item — the same glass inkstand used by the Fathers of Confederation at Quebec City in 1864. While the cameras whirred, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and Hon. Brooke Claxton (acting for Hon. Lester B. Pearson away on NATO business) signed for Canada; Hon. A. J.

SEATED, Rt. Hon. Louis St. Laurent, and Sir Albert Walsh.
STANDING, l to r: Hon. Milton Gregg, Hon. J. J. McCann,
Hon. Brooke Claxton, Hon. Gordon Bradley, Gordon Winter,
Phillip Gruchy, J. R. Smallwood, J. P. McEvoy. Inkwell (centre)
was used during 1864 Quebec Conference by original Fathers
of Confederation.

Walsh and his colleagues, Gordon Bradley, Philip Gruchy, John B. McEvoy, Joseph R. Smallwood and G. A. Winter signed for Newfoundland. (Chesley Crosbie, the seventh delegate, had announced two days earlier that he would not be signing, since he was not satisfied with the fiscal provisions of the terms.) The die was cast; barring some highly improbable development, the union was now confirmed. It might yet be delayed but it could hardly be upset.

By the time the terms of union were signed, little more than three months remained before the target date for union — March 31, 1949; and much had to be done in that time. There was important legislation to be passed both in Ottawa and in London. The exact procedure for bringing into being a provincial government at St. John's had to be worked out; and steps had to be initiated to extend federal services to Newfoundland and to enable the Federal Government to take over such institutions and operations as were to come under federal control after union. Internationally, appropriate steps had to be taken to assure the status of Newfoundland agreements in such fields as trade, civil aviation and telecommunications when Newfoundland had become part of Canada.

During the first three months of 1949, in addition to establishing offices of the Federal Government in St. John's, the Canadian Government sent officials to confer with the Newfoundland Government about the transfer of certain services and the civil-servants associated with them. They also sent officials to advise members of the business community and the public generally on federal regulations in such fields as customs and income tax which would affect them after union. Conversely, Newfoundland officials were visiting Ottawa to familiarize themselves with rules and procedures which they would have to administer as members of the federal service or which would affect their work as members of the provincial service.

Newfoundland had been under a Commission of Government for fifteen years. As a Canadian province it would be governed by a Lieutenant Governor in Council and a Legislature. It would require a First Minister, or Premier, a Cabinet and, as before 1933, an elected legislature — or House of Assembly as the lower house has traditionally been known in Newfoundland. It could not establish these before union, but it would need all of them as soon as possible afterwards. There would be no problem about the

appointment of a Lieutenant Governor, but a Premier and his Cabinet were normally chosen from among *elected* representatives. Newfoundland could not possibly arrange to hold a provincial general election for some weeks after the date of union; and much thought had to be given to the interim or provisional government which would have control in the meantime.

As early as November 6, 1948 the Newfoundland delegation at Ottawa had made up its mind that immediately following union a Lieutenant Governor should be appointed and that he should then appoint an executive council (in other words a Premier and a Cabinet) which should hold office pending a general election. The Canadian Ministers on the Committee also reached a tentative agreement that this proposal could be accepted. The proposed procedure was one of several possibilities. One alternative would have been to continue the Commission of Government, with the Administrator, Sir Edward Emerson, at its head, until the general election.¹

A LAST-DITCH STRUGGLE

Meanwhile, in St. John's, from August onward, there was organized opposition to the steps being taken to negotiate and sign terms of union, and to enact the necessary legislation.

A despatch from St. John's to Ottawa at the end of July reported a "marked stiffening" of the opponents, and the amalgamation of the Responsible Government League and the Economic Union Party. The bid to send a delegation of protest to Ottawa had proved futile but in August a mass petition containing objections to political activities of the Commission of Government was circulated, and on September 2 a mass rally was held. Its proceedings were broadcast over the radio. A thorough canvass of St. John's resulted in many thousands of signatures for the petition.

¹ Implementation of the approved plan required many weeks of painstaking negotiations outside the meetings themselves. It was finally settled that the first Lieutenant Governor should be Mr. Albert Walsh, the leader of the Newfoundland delegation in 1948, and a highly respected Roman Catholic whose appointment would offer some reassurance to a certain number of those who had opposed confederation. Mr. Walsh was known to be of the opinion that Mr. Smallwood (who had chosen to stay in Newfoundland politics while Mr. Bradley went to the Federal Cabinet) should be called on to form a provisional government on April 1. This is what in fact happened.

On September 7 the London *Times* carried an eloquent letter written by Sir Alan Herbert supporting the call for the restoration of Responsible Government.

There was a second mass rally in the C.L.B.¹ Armoury at St. John's. A despatch dated October 11 advised Ottawa of a broadcast made by President F. W. Marshall of the new combined Responsible Government League, urging all listeners to sign the mammoth petition currently being circulated. "Most of those who voted for Confederation have now changed their minds", the speaker asserted. On November 12 the High Commissioner's office reported to Ottawa that a delegation of three was leaving that day for London, carrying the petition addressed to the British Parliament. The group consisted of Major F. W. Marshall, Major Peter J. Cashin, and John G. Higgins.

A cable from London to Ottawa dated November 24 reported that a "petition signed by about 50,000 persons was presented to the House of Commons yesterday by Sir A. P. Herbert, M.P. The prayer of the petitioners was that immediate provision might be made for the restoration of Responsible Government..." A London (Reuters) news despatch dated November 26 gave details of an "all-party motion" put down in the House of Commons by Sir Alan Herbert and associates, calling on the Government "to introduce without delay a bill to repeal the Newfoundland Act of 1933 and to restore self-government to Newfoundland."

On the morning of November 30 the Newfoundland delegation called on Philip Noel-Baker, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. They were introduced to him by Sir Alan Herbert. A series of contentions and charges was aired, including an allegation that the Governor of Newfoundland and two of the Commissioners had "in their official capacities taken a direct part in the campaign for Confederation with Canada."

The Minister listened with courtesy to the charges until the delegation came to the accusation against the Governor. Then, as he later advised Sir Gordon Macdonald, he "had rebuked the delegation strongly" for its charge "against yourself". He would not listen to mere rumor, he had told them. They would have to supply detailed written evidence. As for the two Commissioners,

¹ Church Lads' Brigade.

(H. L. Pottle and H. W. Quinton), they were at liberty, as private citizens, to express their views the same as anyone else.

Another line of attack was to challenge the constitutionality of earlier procedures of the Commission of Government. On November 13 a writ was issued in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland by several former members of the House of Assembly and Legislative Council, seeking a declaration that, among other things, "it was the duty of the Commission of Government to seek restitution of Responsible Government as soon as Newfoundland was self-supporting; that the National Convention Act is repugnant to the Newfoundland Act of 1933; that the Referendum Act was invalid and the proceedings under it null and void." It denied that Confederation could be brought about by the means sought, and declared that "the Imperial Government has no power to make a law providing for Confederation except at the request of an elected Newfoundland Parliament."

The legal action was heard in Chambers on December 6. On December 9 the three-man delegation returned from London and another mass rally was held in the C.L.B. Armoury. A resolution was adopted protesting methods allegedly being used to "push" Newfoundland into Confederation. By this time it was known that the talks at Ottawa were virtually complete and that the *Terms of Union* were to be signed on December 11. After the mass rally, there was a mass march on Government House, and a demand was made that the Governor stop the signing ceremony scheduled for the next day.

The mood of some of the protesters appeared ugly and there was apprehension at Government House that violence would break out. The following day the Commission of Government prepared to ask the United Kingdom to station a naval vessel near enough to restore order on short notice if serious rioting occurred. Happily tempers soon cooled and the apprehension of Government House was allayed.

The signing of the terms at Ottawa did not end the opposition to union, however. On December 13, Mr. Justice Dunfield ruled that the writ against the Commission of Government was invalid. There was an exchange of messages between the Governor and the Responsible Government League. On January 14, 1949, the adverse judgment of Mr. Justice Dunfield was appealed to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. In London, on January 15, Sir



**Some Who Supported
Confederation**

National Film Board

Hon. Gordon Bradley, K. C.



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J. R. Smallwood



National Film Board

J. P. McEvoy, K. C.



Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Gregory Power

Alan Herbert circulated the draft of a *Newfoundland Liberation Bill*.

On the same day, in St. John's, Major Peter Cashin addressed a letter to Canada's High Commissioner (C. J. Burchell)¹ making serious charges against several Canadian leaders. "Let me tell you", he wrote, "that the whole foul plot conceived in 1943 at Quebec — and which, no doubt, you know all about as you were the first Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland — is probably the greatest travesty of justice in the history of the British Empire . . . Your Liberal Government is dishonest. The United Kingdom Government is dishonest, and the latter government saw to it that certain people were installed in office here in Newfoundland who were prepared to go to any lengths to influence the voters of our country." He charged that Canada wanted Newfoundland because of its own current difficulties over foreign exchange, and because it wanted to re-negotiate the U.S. deal for the defence bases. "Canada wants to come in and steal the territory from us in order that she can again bargain with her neighbour across the border", he concluded. He added that he was releasing copies of his letter to the press and sending a copy also to the Governor of Newfoundland.

In due course the texts of the judgments of Chief Justice Emerson and Judge Winter rejecting the writ charging unconstitutional procedure against the Newfoundland Government were released. The "broken pledge" allegation against the United Kingdom authorities was analyzed at length. The appellants had contended that in 1933 the British Parliament had promised that Responsible Government would be restored eventually to Newfoundland, and that they were entitled as Newfoundland individuals or as a group to call for a performance of that promise. Referring to the fact that the 1933 Act had made restoration of responsible government conditional, *inter alia*, on a request from the people of Newfoundland, Chief Justice Emerson commented, "The only way in which the people could request such restoration (of Responsible Government) was by referendum. Surely no one would seriously aver that responsible government should be restored and then the people asked to request its retention? That is not only an absurdity but it would be in breach of the so-called

¹ Mr. Burchell's re-appointment to the post he had earlier held (1941-44) had been announced the previous September.

contract. It could be a restoration before the people requested it." The Newfoundland Supreme Court nevertheless granted leave to the former members of the House of Assembly to appeal the rejection of their writ to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council at Westminster.

The only hope now for the anti-confederate opposition lay in the United Kingdom. At least an effort could be made to defeat or delay the B.N.A. legislation at Westminster; and the appeal to the Privy Council challenging the constitutionality of the measures leading up to the negotiations at Ottawa could be pressed. On February 23 Sir Alan Herbert and thirteen other members of the British House of Commons urged that the Newfoundland Bill be postponed pending the Privy Council judgment. But his amendment was defeated on March 2 by 217 to 15. On March 12 Lord Sempill announced that when the Bill came to the House of Lords he would move for rejection; but three days later he withdrew his motion; and on March 23 the House of Lords gave third reading. Royal Assent was given on the same day.

The last of the legislative hurdles had been negotiated. But on March 28, in a last defiant gesture, the Responsible Government League sent a message to the Speaker of the House of Commons at Ottawa, declaring that they reserved the right at any future time to take such steps as might be required to secede from Canada and restore Newfoundland's lost sovereignty.

THE DEBATE IN THE CANADIAN PARLIAMENT

On January 27 Parliament opened a new session at Ottawa: the Speech from the Throne announced that provision would be made for Newfoundland's entry into Confederation. On February 7 Prime Minister St. Laurent introduced into the Canadian House of Commons the Bill providing for Newfoundland's entry.

Introducing the resolution which heralded the Bill to approve the *Terms of Union*, Prime Minister St. Laurent called the proposed measure "epoch-making". The fifth session of the twentieth parliament, he said, "has the historic task of considering the addition to Canada of the last segment in the original plan of the Fathers of Confederation." He reviewed the relations between the two countries and the history of Newfoundland. During the second world war, he went on, it became "the outpost of defence of the North American continent and the jumping-off place for



Newfoundland Public Archives

Peter J. Cashin

**Some Who Supported
Responsible
Government**



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Chesley A. Crosbie



Book of Newfoundland, Vol. III

Don Jamieson



Book of Newfoundland, Vol. IV

A. B. Perlin

convoys to Europe". He recalled the nature of the negotiations of the previous autumn. "I come now to the matter of financial terms", he went on. "That was a tough one." The offer made in 1947 was seen to be clearly inadequate when the situation was more thoroughly examined, and larger provisional or transitional grants were agreed upon, supplemented by a provision that within eight years from the coming into force of union a Royal Commission would be set up for a re-appraisal of Newfoundland's fiscal position. He closed his lengthy address with the hope that the terms proposed would commend themselves "to the Canadian Parliament, to the vast majority of the Canadian people and also to the vast majority of the people of Newfoundland."

The debate in the House of Commons lasted nearly two weeks; all parties spoke; almost every conceivable aspect of union was examined; charges of undemocratic procedure were aired and answers were offered. In general the mood of all parties was one of welcome to the new province. The only jarring note for the supporters of union was an amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. George Drew, on February 14, insisting that, before the request was made to the United Kingdom Government for the necessary amendment to the *British North America Act*, "the government of Canada should consult with the governments of the several provinces in respect to the said matter."

The long debate which followed was really about provincial rights rather than about the entry of Newfoundland. Friends of union were perturbed because the legislative and constitutional time-table was very tight already, with much to be done before March 31 if the union was to be completed on that date.

A despatch from the High Commissioner in St. John's suggests that the general public in Newfoundland was not impressed by this threat to the speedy passage of the necessary legislation. A précis of press reaction from the leading Newfoundland papers showed that even former anti-Confederate editors saw in the Drew amendment an "attempt to frustrate" the wishes of those Newfoundlanders who voted for union. The *Daily News* saw in it a bid "to acquire some popularity in the key province of Quebec. All that has come out of the Drew move is perhaps a little more political kudos for a party which has high hopes of capturing the Government before the end of the year."

The debate on the Drew amendment, like that on the main motion, brought out a rich variety of observation and opinion.

There were voices of dissent: two or three Quebec nationalists raised sharp objections; again there was criticism of the way union had been brought about. But the majority opinion in the House of Commons not only welcomed Newfoundland warmly but resisted any attempt to delay proceedings, so that the Drew amendment was defeated by 140 to 74 on February 16. By the following day the legislation had been endorsed in both Canadian Houses and Royal Assent was given on February 18. On February 21 the Commission of Government in Newfoundland also approved the Terms of Union, paving the way for the formal amendment of the *British North America Act* by the British Parliament in March.

TWILIGHT AND SUNRISE

Once the *Terms of Union* had been endorsed by the Canadian Parliament the way was clear to plan the formal steps needed to bring Newfoundland into the union on March 31, the date cited in the December agreement. On February 21 the Canadian High Commissioner, C. J. Burchell, advised his Minister at Ottawa that, in his opinion, "the quieter the transition on April 1st is made the better it will be in respect of future relations between this country and the rest of Canada." He reminded Ottawa of the modest size of the referendum majority, adding that "you cannot expect the large minority to express any jubilation on the date the union becomes effective." This was especially true, he added, in the city of St. John's and on the Avalon Peninsula, where substantially two-thirds of the population had voted against Confederation.

The High Commissioner's office reported a recent address before the Patrician Association which reflected the nostalgia of those who were not enthusiastic about the change in Newfoundland's political status. A distinguished Newfoundland lawyer, Charles E. Hunt, had said that "Britain's Oldest Colony is about to become Canada's Youngest Province, and the days ahead will be sad for many of the older generation." The sunrise which would follow the "clouded sunset" might bring material benefits — but also "an increased circulation of strange doctrines . . . It is much better," Mr. Hunt contended, "to belong to a small country, because you can carry it more easily in your heart."

Late in March a formal letter was addressed by the Clerk of the Privy Council in Ottawa to Chief Justice Sir Edward Emerson,

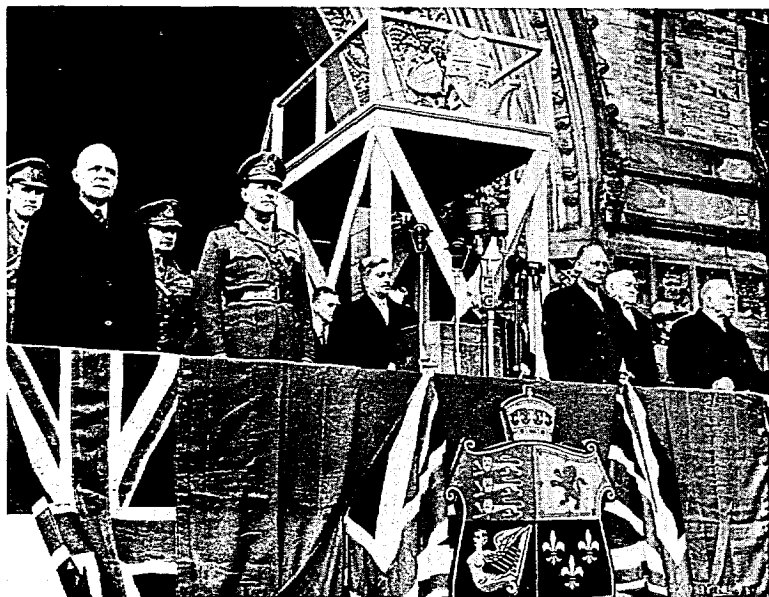
who, by virtue of his office, would form the constitutional link in the transition from the Commission of Government of Newfoundland to its new status as a Province of Canada. Sir Edward was informed that on April 1, 1949 an Order-in-Council would be passed appointing Hon. A. J. Walsh to be the first Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Newfoundland. Sir Edward was asked to administer the oath of allegiance and the oath of office to him. The swearing-in ceremony "can be as elaborate or as simple as appears to you and Mr. Walsh to be appropriate". Hon. Colin Gibson, Secretary of State of Canada, and his secretary, Mr. Levy, would attend. The Commission appointing Mr. Walsh was to be read and published "in the presence of yourself, the remaining members of the Newfoundland Commission of Government and the members of the Executive Council designate."

CEREMONIES OF UNION

Newfoundland joined Canada at the stroke of midnight on March 31, 1949. On the following day a quiet indoor ceremony at St. John's was followed by a mass open air ceremony on Parliament Hill in Ottawa — both broadcast "from sea to sea" by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This sealed the union, and inaugurated the new era for both countries.

The sequence of events went like this. In the Ball Room of Government House in St. John's a small but distinguished group assembled, led by Sir Edward Emerson, the Chief Justice of Newfoundland. With him were Sir Albert Walsh (as he then was), the Lieutenant Governor designate; the other judges of the Supreme Court; representatives of the several churches; the former Acting High Commissioner for Canada; representatives of the United States, France and Portugal (which maintained consulates general in St. John's); the mayor of St. John's; other members of the local government; the Premier designate (Mr. J. R. Smallwood) and his prospective Cabinet colleagues. Representative citizens and their wives and members of the press from Newfoundland, other parts of Canada and elsewhere were also in attendance.

A St. John's choir directed by Robert McLeod opened the Newfoundland ceremonies with the singing of two verses of the *Ode to Newfoundland*. The new Lieutenant Governor was sworn in by Chief Justice Sir Edward Emerson. Hon. Colin Gibson then presented to the new Lieutenant Governor a Certificate of Canadian citizenship. "As you will see", he said as he presented it, "it



Public Archives of Canada

Ceremony at the Peace Tower, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, on April 1, 1949 — Principals, l to r: Rt. Hon. Louis St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada; Viscount Alexander of Tunis, Governor General of Canada; Hon. Gordon Bradley; Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King

certifies that every Newfoundland British subject coming within the relevant provisions of the *Canadian Citizenship Act* adds to his status as a British subject that of being a Canadian citizen . . . and is entitled to all rights, powers and privileges, and subject to all obligations, duties and liabilities, to which a natural-born Canadian is entitled or subject." Mr. Gibson said he spoke for all the people of Canada "in extending to the people of Newfoundland a welcome into our Canadian family".

Sir Albert Walsh, in accepting the certificate, said he was sure that all the people of Newfoundland would wish him to express, through Mr. Gibson, their appreciation of the welcome and to extend best wishes to a people with whom Newfoundlanders had for many years been so closely associated.

The CBC broadcast then switched to Ottawa, where the Dominion Carillonneur, Robert Donnell, was heard in a lively version of the Newfoundland folk song, *The Squid Jiggin' Ground*. It was a beautiful day for an outdoor ceremony, with a cool wind



Montreal Standard

Principals in ceremony at Government House, St. John's, on April 1, 1949 — L to r: Hon. Colin Gibson, Secretary of State of Canada; Sir Albert Walsh being sworn in as first Lieutenant Governor of the new Province; Sir Edward Emerson, Administrator and Chief Justice, administering the oath. (W. J. Carew, Secretary to the Government, looks on.)

and a brilliant sun. Parliament Hill was crowded with people including hundreds of citizens of Ottawa and civil servants who had been let out early for the lunch hour. A guard of honor and the band of the Governor General's Foot Guards added a splash of vivid color, and over on Nepean Point the nineteen gun salute was being readied. Viscount Alexander of Tunis, Governor General of Canada, and his official party were greeted by a Royal Salute and six bars of the Canadian national anthem. Photographers swarmed about the platform specially erected on the steps of the Peace Tower. In the distinguished party could be seen Canada's Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, and Rt. Hon. Sir Lyman Poore Duff, Chief Justice of Canada.

The Prime Minister began his address with a warm welcome. "The formal union is completed today", Mr. St. Laurent said. "But the real union — the union of hearts and minds — took

place in the recent terrible war in which Canadians and Newfoundlanders were so closely joined. . . Newfoundland is in the very centre of the North Atlantic community. Canada as a whole occupies a large part of the North Atlantic area. The nations of that whole area will be more secure in the new North Atlantic association. In the same way, Canada and Newfoundland will have greater security in being bound together in federal union." He praised the great potential of Canada, and added: "The people of Newfoundland, who have today become citizens of Canada, will share with the people of the rest of Canada in the work and in the wealth of our nation. Together we will strive, under God's guidance and with confidence in our future, to build a greater and a better land."

Praising the qualities of the people of Newfoundland, he quoted from the poetry of E. J. Pratt, native son:

*This is their culture, this — their master passion
Of giving shelter and of sharing bread.
Of answering rocket signals in the fashion
Of losing life to give it. In the spread
Of time — the Gilbert-Grenfell-Bartlett span —
The headlines cannot dim their daily story,
Nor calls like London! Gander! Teheran!
Outplay the drama of the sled and dory.*

When he had finished, the Hon. Gordon Bradley, who had that morning been sworn in as Canada's Secretary of State, said: "This is a day which will live long in North American history." It was, he went on, a day of fulfilment — "fulfilment of a vision of great men who planned the nation of Canada more than eighty years ago." Thoughts flew back through the years to men like Macdonald, Brown and Cartier of Canada, Carter and Shea of Newfoundland. Their vision was broader and deeper than their times. "In fancy we can see them now, bending over this scene in silent and profound approval."

"We are all Canadians now", Bradley concluded. "Now, as never before, can it be said of this land that her bounds extend from sea to sea. From the eastern shores of the new province of Newfoundland to the coast of British Columbia let us go forward together with faith in the principles and traditions which we hold in common."



Montreal Standard

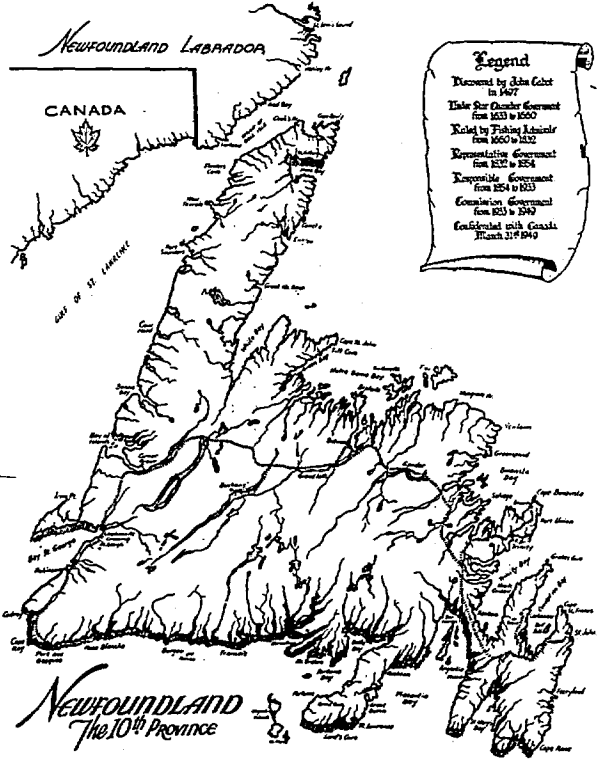
The first Provincial Cabinet, l to r: Hon. Gordon Winter, Minister of Finance; Hon. Samuel J. Hefferton, Minister of Education; Hon. Philip Forsey, Minister of Home Affairs; Hon. William J. Keough, Minister of Natural Resources; Hon. Herman W. Quinton, Minister of Public Health; Hon. J. R. Smallwood, Premier and Minister of Industrial Development; Hon. Herbert L. Pottle, Minister of Public Welfare; Hon. C. H. Ballam, Minister of Labour; Hon. Michael J. Sinnott, Minister of Public Works; Hon. Leslie R. Curtis, Minister of Justice and Attorney General.
STANDING: W. J. Carew, Secretary.

Then followed the scribing of the first lines in the shield designated to carry the arms of Newfoundland. A scaffold had been erected at the entrance to the Parliament Buildings, and on the elevated platform the chief sculptor, Cléophas Soucy, Mr. Bradley and Prime Minister St. Laurent — while camera shutters clicked and movie cameras whirred — completed this symbolic rite. Referring to the hitherto blank shield, the Prime Minister said it “was left blank for the day, which the fathers of confederation had foreseen, when Newfoundland would join Canada. That day has come.” He paid tribute to the “large and decisive part” Mackenzie King played in bringing about the union, and ended: “I feel confident that the inscription in hard and enduring stone will not be more lasting than the union of which it is the symbol.”

The Governor General conveyed a warm message from His Majesty the King. "May the union that is now complete continue, under God's guidance, to grow in strength, prosperity, happiness, and may it bring new benefits to its people from sea to sea", His Majesty prayed.

The ceremony ended with the playing of *God Save the King*, the *Ode to Newfoundland*, and *O Canada*, followed by a Royal Salute. The arch and the union, as Viscount Alexander said, were now complete.

"God Guard Thee, Newfoundland"



St. John's Daily News, March 31, 1949

EPILOGUE

TRIBUTES AND TESTIMONIALS

Until public debate on Canadian Confederation began in 1864, the scattered residents of British North America knew almost nothing about each other. One effect of the conferences and negotiations of 1864-67 was more extensive travel than ever before, and the spread of mutual knowledge in private letters and public discussions. Federal union may be signed in constitutional documents, but it must be sealed and delivered in the hearts and minds and memories of the united peoples. In the same way as in 1864-67, the discussions leading up to union with Newfoundland in 1947-49 made many Canadians aware for the first time of the neighboring land and its people. Some of the more poetic or perceptive comments at that time deserve to be recalled and remembered. Here are some of them:

"Newfoundland is a country of proverbial beauty", T. G. W. Ashbourne (a member of the 1947 delegation to Ottawa) told the House of Commons on Sept. 26, 1949. "We have our majestic headlands, some of them rising in sheer grandeur hundreds of feet, and down the steep slopes come tumbling the waterfalls."

• • •

"The Newfoundland fishermen come from a hardy race of men and by their courage and resourcefulness they have built up a long and honorable tradition of life on the sea", said R. W. Mayhew, Minister of Fisheries, in the House of Commons on February 9, 1949. "From generation to generation they have faced without question the challenge and hazards of the sea; they have gone out in very small boats and battled the elements; they plied their perilous trade long before the advent of steam and other modern improvements and safeguards. In spite of the many obstacles they have had to overcome — and have overcome — they have forced their way into the markets of the world. They have succeeded not only because of their initiative and courage, but also because of their skill in the methods of processing and because of their attention to the quality of their products."

• • •

"Newfoundland is a tourist's paradise", testified John R. MacNicol in the House of Commons on February 8, 1949. "It has magnificent bays all around the island."

• • •



Newfoundland Historical Society

Hon. C. J. Burchell

“Ours is a beautiful land”, declared Senator Ray Petten of Newfoundland in his maiden speech at Ottawa on September 20, 1949 “its climate and its scenery varying greatly. The perfect calm and mirrored quietude of long bays and sounds that reach inland for many miles in Bonavista and Trinity Bays, and the peaceful islands which make Notre Dame Bay a veritable paradise where trees thickly cover the hills down to the water’s edge, contrast sharply with the bold rocky capes and headlands which in naked beauty jut out into the stormy North Atlantic. The raw weather of the east coast is balanced by the finer, drier atmosphere of the Humber Valley. The storms of winter and long spring find compensation in a summer which, if rather brief, provides some of the finest weather imaginable, with hot sunlight tempered by wholesome sea breezes. In this setting of natural resources, the sportsman finds his Eden, with the wary salmon waiting to be outwitted and a plenitude of large trout eager to fight the angler; while inland the lordly moose and fleet caribou roam the picturesque and scenic barrens.”

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At the same time, in the House of Commons, M. J. Coldwell, CCF leader, a native himself of the English West Country which



Newfoundland Historical Society

J. Scott Macdonald

provided the ancestors of so many Newfoundlanders, quoted with approval Lord Ammon's 1943 tribute to the Newfoundland people: "I should record my appreciation of the integrity, shrewdness, and high level of intelligence of the Newfoundlanders. They are, on the whole, a kindly, hospitable people, hard-working yet easy-going, well-mannered but outspoken, thrifty but generous to strangers. Living in close contact with nature, employed for the most part on hard and often dangerous manual work; they have an ingrained healthy contempt of danger; an easy — perhaps too easy — philosophy that tomorrow will look after itself, and an ability to turn their hands to anything from boat building to home construction. Their aptitude as seamen is well-known, and their contribution in manpower in this war requires no comment. It would be hard to find a more loyal and delightful people."

M. J. Coldwell also recalled that Newfoundland's people "are descended principally from those hardy seafaring folk who crossed the stormy Atlantic in little cockleshells of boats from places like Bristol, Bideford, Plymouth, fishing villages along the Devon and Cornish coasts and from places on the shores of Brittany, Normandy and Scotland." (So Hansard quotes him, but did he not also add Ireland?)

• • •

The people, "bred to disaster from their daily struggle with the sea, drew courage from adversity", wrote St. John Chadwick, who was with Lord Ammon in 1943 on the good-will mission to Newfoundland and who subsequently wrote the book *Newfoundland, Island into Province*.

• • •

"Many who spoke out against union (in the Convention) were the product of a fiercely proud and independent tradition", wrote Don Jamieson in *The Book of Newfoundland*. "They were members of ancient Newfoundland families who had made Water Street an important North American trading centre years before Montreal was founded and while New York was still a swamp. Some had forebears who had fought valiantly to win Responsible Government for Newfoundland. They felt to support Confederation would be to betray their heritage."

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Sir Alan Herbert, the famous humorist and stout supporter of Newfoundland rights, found Newfoundlanders "a shy and rather reticent people . . . gay, good-humored and generous, tolerant, temperate, tough, God-fearing, sabbath-keeping, law-abiding."

• • •

"As proud as Lucifer and as cocky and independent as any little group of people ever was in North America", was J. R. Smallwood's addition.

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—On February 16, 1949 Mackenzie King, in his last speech in the Canadian House of Commons, had this to say: "There can be no doubt that the union of Newfoundland with Canada will be to the mutual advantage of the peoples of both countries. It will, however, mean more than mere mutual advantage. The talent, the enterprise, the resources which each will contribute to the other will help to strengthen both. What is more, at a time such as the present, it will help to give each of us a greater confidence as we face the uncertainties of the future."

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Two Houses in the Spring,
a serigraph by Christopher Pratt

