

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**First Session – Eleventh Legislature**

**Thursday, March 31, 1949**

The Assembly met at 3:00 o'clock p.m.

**WELCOME TO NEW PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND**

**Premier Douglas:** — Mr. Speaker, it might be appropriate for the Legislature to just take a few moments to give consideration to the fact that this is a very historic day in the history of the Dominion of Canada in that on this day a new province is being added to the Canadian family. At midnight tonight Newfoundland becomes the tenth province of our Dominion, and it is an historical occasion as it now brings another part of the British Commonwealth into the Dominion of Canada.

I am sure that all the hon. members will want to publicly welcome Newfoundland into Confederation, and to say how glad we are that they are joining with us and to hope that the relationship will be a happy one.

In 1934 Newfoundland, which up until that time had had self-government, was placed at their own request, as most members will remember, under a Commission. That Commission administered the affairs of Newfoundland until a few short years ago. The British government, after having sent in a group of people to make a study of the situation, both their economic and political problems, arranged for a convention to which all interested parties and groups were invited. That convention, after studying the report of the British committee, suggested that a referendum should be held on the part of the citizens of Newfoundland. The first referendum turned down the idea of responsible self-government. The second referendum voted in favour of joining the Dominion of Canada; whether there was a small majority or a large majority it does not seem to me matters now, but a majority of the people voting did vote to come into Canadian Confederation. I think, to some extent it is unfortunate that in the period that has intervened there have been some constitutional quarrels about how they should come in. I am one that has never held to the compact theory of Confederation. I do not think it is widely held in this province. We have never take the position in this province, I do not think, under any government, that we are sovereign power and that we need to be consulted before another opposition can come in. We have taken the position that we are now a nation of Canadian people with a central government having certain clearly defined functions, and that we have provincial governments which also have certain jurisdiction within which they operate. I can think of nothing more democratic than the manner in which Newfoundland has come into Canadian Confederation. They came in by referendum of their own citizens, by action of the Canadian parliament, and by amendments to the British North America Act by the parliament of the United Kingdom. I am sure I am expressing the hope of all members and of the people of Saskatchewan generally, when I say that I hope the people of Newfoundland will not feel that any differences of opinion there may have been about constitutional procedure will in any way detract from the very warm welcome which we extend to them as they come into the Canadian family.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, on this historic and very propitious occasion, I would like to move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition:

That this Legislative Assembly, in its own behalf and that of the people it represents, warmly and wholeheartedly welcome into the Dominion family of provinces the new province of Newfoundland; looks upon this day – March 31, 1949 – as marking the consummation of an age-old desire for the union of the British democracies of North America; views this historic occasion as a further stop in Canada's march towards the fullness of its destiny; expresses the sincere hope that this union will redound to the mutual advantage of the contracting parties, and prays that Divine Providence will bounteously bless and prosper the ten provinces now at last welded into one nation, united in a common allegiance, with common aims and aspiration, and dedicated to the peaceful promotion of the welfare of all the peoples of this Greater Canada.

**Mr. Tucker:** — I am sure that everyone on this side of the House will agree with the remarks of the hon. Premier in regard to this very great occasion when our Confederation is being completed.

The representatives from Newfoundland attended the Quebec conference as the hon. members know, and the two gentlemen who attended apparently were satisfied with the resolution which later became the basis of the London resolutions upon which the British North America Act was based; but in a later referendum the people of Newfoundland did not vote to enter Confederation. There was a further movement for them to join Confederation in the latter days of the last century but, again, that came to nothing. So we had, on the north half of this continent, the Dominion of Canada, a member of the British Commonwealth, and, of course, Newfoundland, which was referred to as the oldest British colony.

It was always, I think, the feeling of many people that the great vision of the Father of Confederation has been, in some respects, more than realized by the filling out of Canada to the west, but, in some way, there had been a failure in regard to Newfoundland not becoming part of the family. When one looks back at what the Fathers of Confederation faced when they met together in 1864, to endeavour to come to an agreement, and when one thinks that Upper and Lower Canada were then populated by people of two different races and that in joining together they were putting so much faith in one another's willingness to live up to the only basis on which they could hope to get along; the faith, for example, that the representatives of what is now Quebec showed in what was to be their fellow citizens of the rest of Canada in joining with them and putting their future into their hands to a great extent, one must certainly say that the faith of those people in their fellow man was really something to admire and for us to look back to with admiration.

As I view our different troubles today, and hear people find fault with those of our fellow Canadians, French-speaking Canadians, in the province of Quebec, I often think that they do not realize that without a great act of faith those people showed when they agreed to enter Confederation, confederation would never have been possible – if it had not been for the willingness

of our French speaking fellow citizens to join together with the rest of what is now Canada. I think, in the first place, it should make us very tolerant of the claims and rights that they feel were given to them at that time, should always be respected; and always feel that we owe a great deal to their sense of tolerance and their willingness to co-operate, and their willingness to trust their fellow citizens because without that our great country would never have had its birth. It was the nature almost of a marriage; each person trusts his future to the other, and because of that great act of faith it seems to me that there is a great obligation upon all parts of Canada to respect the basic rights of the people who actually went together to form our country. On no account, it seems to me, should the letter or the spirit on which that great pact was entered into be violated. I feel that should always be understood and remembered because without that willingness to come together at that time, our country never could have become a country.

The faith that they had has been vindicated because I think that we get along together in our country in a very splendid way. I do not suppose there is a country in the world composed of so many different racial origins that are bound to make up our basic stock, where there is so much real basis tolerance and goodwill. What happened during the war when people of biased racial origins came together and each played their full part in such a splendid way was a great demonstration of the basic unity of our country.

As today we see the vision of those Fathers of confederation finally achieved, and now the Confederation of all British people in the northern half of this continent is finally completed, we may say that the federal idea and the goodwill and tolerance and mutual confidence has been vindicated because if the people of Newfoundland had not been absolutely satisfied that the basic rights which had been agreed should be given to the provinces in regard to education and in regard to the exercise of basic rights of language, religion; if they had not felt that all those rights had been respected by the people of Canada, I do not think they would have been willing to join. It is a great thing to think that, in these days when some countries are trying to extend their power by virtue of force, the attitude of our country towards Newfoundland, although there was this background and hope that went back to the days of 1864 that they would be part of our country, when the intimation was made to our country that they would like to join us, there was never the slightest pressure brought to bear whatever. The attitude was: you people must decide this absolutely for yourselves. We will tell you the terms upon which we feel that we are willing to have you join; we will discuss them with you, and then you shall go back to your own people and they shall decide whether you become part of this nation of Canada, and they voted for that without the slightest degree of pressure or in any way anything being done by the people of Canada to try to get them to take that step.

I think it is a great tribute to the Canadian people that this proud old colony has been willing to join us. It shows that they feel that we are a people that they would like to join their future with. I think the Canadian people may be very proud that those fellow citizens of ours are willing to join us practically for all time to come. It was a most momentous decision for them to make because it was a decision which, once made, there could be no turning back from.

I agree with what the Premier said in regard to the welcome which we all feel towards them. We have shared a great deal of trouble and difficulty particularly in the post-war and the second war. No people showed themselves more ready to sacrifice themselves for the cause of liberty and freedom than the great people of Newfoundland. I am sure that, as we now take them into our country, and welcome them as a province of Canada, we welcome one of the finest peoples in the world; one of the braves, the most courageous, and as fine a people as inhabit any part of the earth's surface, and we can be proud to have them as part of our country. I am sure that in the hearts of every Canadian must go a feeling of thankfulness that the great vision of the Father of Confederation is now at last realized, that we are welcoming into our midst such a gallant people as the people of Newfoundland. I am sure all of us feel that we will go forward together to a very great future.

We will now be a people of almost 13.5 million souls. Providence has blessed us with great forest areas, great mineral areas, great farming lands, great lakes, great water falls; we have been blessed almost beyond any people on the face of the globe. We have tried to preserve the democratic form of life and government, and I think we are probably as happy a people as any on the face of the globe. We have a future for our children, which is as good as the future of the children of any country in the whole world. So, I think, as we celebrate this great occasion of the completion of the building of our nations, we should express with all humility profound gratitude to Divine Providence for the way it has blessed our country, the way we have been protected and shielded, the way we have been guided, and that we may, under His guidance, look forward to a greater and greater future for our children in the generations to come.

**Hon. Mr. Brockelbank:** — With the consent of the House, I would like to take about one or two minutes to make a few remarks on this question.

Sometime ago, in the Department of Natural Resources, we had the idea that it would be nice to commemorate in some lasting way this event. So we decided to name one of the physical feature or our province after the new province, Newfoundland, coming into Confederation at this time, would be in one way a fitting commemoration and a lasting commemoration of this event. So we have found in Beaver Lake, or Amisk Lake, in township 63, range 2, W. 2nd Meridian, there is an island approximately one square mile in area. It has locally been known as the Big Island, but there are other islands in the province or at least one island if not more, that has the official name of Big Island, and so we are now proceeding to name this island 'Newfoundland Island'. I have a map here showing where it is located, which I would be glad to lay on the Clerk's table so the members can have a look at it. This island will, therefore, serve as a marker along the historic fur trade route of the Sturgeon-Weir River to the Churchill River basin. A post was established by Alec Henry and Joseph and Thomas Frobisher on Amisk Lake in 1775, and it is, therefore, among the early settled areas of the province, being established one year after Cumberland House which is the oldest continuously settled area in the province. Although Newfoundland was discovered by John Cabot on June 24, 1497 and claimed for England by sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583, and ante-dates the discover of Amisk Lake by almost 300 years, nevertheless it does seem appropriate that an island in one of the early discovered areas of this province, the second earliest permanent settlement in this province, is now named to commemorate the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation.

The Assembly adjourned at 6:00 o'clock p.m.