

that it is perfectly competent for this Convention to send a delegation to Ottawa or anywhere else seeking information that is desired upon any basic fact.

Mr. Hollett What I cannot understand is this: when the Dominions Office through the Commission of Government, or vice versa, set up this Convention, they also set up a commission of two, two men from England to come out here and prepare a White Paper to guide us in our deliberations. I searched through that and all I find are a set of facts. I cannot find anything to suggest that we should go to Canada and find out anything. Why did not the imperial authorities in that White Paper state definitely that we were to find out the terms of confederation? Why did they not say that was a form of government we should talk about? They only speak of a form or forms of government and it seems to me that at the time they only had in their minds a form of government within the territorial boundary of this island. If they meant "outside" why did they not supply us with facts, as they did about this country?

Mr. Chairman What is contained or is not contained in that White Paper, to which you refer, has nothing to do with the question before the Chair or to my ruling on that question.... I am not concerned with what is in the White Paper insofar as the construction of the National Convention Act is concerned. It is totally irrelevant to the question or my ruling thereon.

Mr. Fogwill In this debate, I am rather confused by the question brought up by Mr. Hollett. We have your ruling that it is within the limits of this Convention that we should seek the terms of confederation, but we have yet to decide whether or not it would be valid for this Convention to place on the ballot paper this form of government. And what appeal has this assembly against your decision?

Mr. Chairman The assembly can overrule my decision or ruling. That does not deal with the validity of your question, Mr. Fogwill. It merely deals with the wish of the Convention either to be bound by my ruling or not to be bound.

[The Convention adjourned until 8 pm]

Mr. Higgins I hope I do not keep you too long. We have been long enough on this unfortunate matter, much longer than it warrants. So far, if my computations are correct (and I am no mathematician) the debate has cost the country \$8,000.

If so the debate on confederation will cost in the vicinity of \$40,000. But my reason for seconding this motion was because I understood it to be the wish of the majority of delegates that we have a spring referendum. I do not know if that was stated in the house or not. At all events it was discussed on a number of occasions in private sessions, and it was not the sessions of the "little National Convention", but sessions of full responsible parties. As you, sir, and the learned Professor Wheare have outlined, in order to have a spring referendum we must finish our business by the end of January. That would mean that not only must we have all of our facts in, but we must have the debate on the forms of government concluded and we must be ready at that time to send our recommendations across to England. If it is not the intention to have a spring referendum, as so many members wished at first, then we have to set our sights at a fall referendum. But even for a fall referendum, we must be finished here by the end of May. If it is the wish to have a fall referendum, then I say that the motion we should adopt here would be the amendment proposed by Mr. Bradley. If we leave it indefinite, as in the other amendment, we do not know when we will be in a position to seek terms we all agree we must have.... We have a big task ahead, but I am confident that we can finish our fact gathering by the end of January, if we really want to do it. It is going to mean much harder work than we have been putting in so far.... If you gentlemen are prepared, and you think the necessity warrants, then by all means let us wait until May. We definitely have to be finished by May or we cannot have the referendum until the following spring. It is simply up to us to decide what we are going to shoot for. It is a common agreement among all of us that we have got to get these terms otherwise we will be blackguarded out of the country.

We are being blackguarded as it is by the very unseemly conduct which has happened in this House. I am sure Mr. Smallwood will probably feel offended, but it is most unfortunate, and he himself is responsible for that. I can understand how Mr. Smallwood feels; he is ardent in his advocacy, and he just had to get it off or blow up. One thing we do not want, and that is to be ridiculous in the sight of the country and this debate has been making us ridiculous. I am sure