

Newfoundland or any other. Confederation therefore is not a case of a couple of businessmen driving a bargain; it is not a case of a couple of horsetraders, each trying to outsmart the other; it is not a matter of haggling, or bargaining, or even negotiating, except in the very broadest and loosest sense of that term. It is a case of ascertaining what are the terms of union as laid down by the British North America Act, and by the various regulations and agreements having their roots in that act. Nor can the federal government discriminate against, or unduly favour any province or proposed province. It has a duty not to unduly favour any province at the expense of others. All that any delegation, whether it be from an elected government or from this Convention can do, is to learn the limits of what is possible under Canada's constitution.

Sir, that has been done by the Ottawa delegation, and the Prime Minister of Canada himself tells us plainly in his letter to His Excellency the Governor, that on the financial side the proposals he has laid before us are the best that Canada can offer. No delegation of an elected government, or any other government could do more. But notwithstanding all these hard facts the anticonfederates continue their refrain. "Give us back what we had", they insist, "and in the first general election the confederates can enter a political party. If they win a majority they will be the government, and they can go to Ottawa and negotiate terms." That is the plan they have rather clumsily worked out. Let us take a look at that. I have already pointed out that responsible government might not win at the referendum. The people may refuse to vote for it, for the simple reason that they don't want it. In that event confederation would not be submitted to the people at all, if the anticonfederate plans were worked out. Thus would they cheat the people out of their right to consider confederation by forcing them to vote for what they don't want in order to get what they do want.

And if we assume, *if we assume* that responsible government is accepted under these immoral conditions, it might well happen that no political party favourable to confederation would enter the field, for it requires both money and organisation to fight an election. That alone could defeat the wishes of tens of thousands of Newfoundlanders who want to vote on this question

of confederation. And even if a confederate party were formed, what assurance is there that it would win a majority of the districts? It might have no election funds, or it might have some but still be smothered under the weight of anticonfederate money. All these possibilities exist. We all know what has happened in elections in this country before, and the same things can happen again. A general election is no way to decide so vitally important a matter as the very nature and very form of the future government of this country. In the noise and excitement of party contest, amidst all the hysteria and propaganda, with all the charges and counter-charges and political catch-cries and abuse, the promises of grants to sectional interests, jobs and concessions to individuals, in all that chaos of excitement what possible chance would any form of government have of being calmly considered on its merits? People might indeed desire to give it that calm and careful consideration, but they would be badgered and hounded, and confused and bewildered by the propaganda and personalities, and the wild political charges and promises so characteristic of general elections in the past. No sir, the time for the people to give careful consideration to such a vital matter is not in the heat and bitterness of a general election, where candidates are vying with each other to get votes, but in the far cooler and more rational atmosphere of a referendum, where there are no candidates seeking election, and where the people themselves are selecting the very form of government of their choice. They are not true friends of Newfoundland or of her people, who would plunge this country and her people into the boiling pot of a party contest, and subject it to the distorting and fighting and squabbling of a general election, where the personal popularity, the promises, and speaking ability of candidates are such important factors.

In this connection there is another point which is of great importance. This plan might easily bring a decision contrary to the wishes of the majority. I want to repeat that, sir. This plan might very well bring a decision contrary to the wishes of the majority. What guarantee have we that the party which secures the majority of the seats in the House of Assembly will have a majority of the total vote polled? I have seen candidates elected by five votes, and others by