

advisability of changing from 10 cents a ton, to that which they now have, 5% of the net profits. That was the only thing they were asked their opinion on. These people are there to advise mining interests as to the possibility and feasibility of mining in the British Empire. They were not consulted about water-power and not about concessions. I asked questions about

water-power in Quebec, and that information they are getting for me, and when they send it, I will give it to the Convention.

[The committee of the whole rose, and the Convention tabled the report. The Convention then passed and tabled the report of the Finance Committee without debate, and received the report of the Public Health and Welfare Committee]

Motion to Send a Delegation to Washington

Mr. Chairman Mr. Penney to move that this National Convention appoint a delegation of some six members, or less, forthwith to proceed to Washington, if and when arrangements can be made, for general trade discussions and other relevant matters affecting the future economy of Newfoundland with the Government of the United States of America.

You will recollect we had a resolution of a somewhat similar character in the early part of February, made by Mr. Job.¹ The motion itself was for the purpose of acquiring a discussion with the Commission of Government, for the purpose of obtaining advice from them as to how to proceed about the matter. I have a copy of that resolution here:

What steps, if any, can be taken for establishing improved economic or fiscal relationships between the United States of America and Newfoundland particularly bearing in mind the present occupation of certain Newfoundland territory by the said United States of America and the fact that free entry is accorded to the United States for its importations into Newfoundland....

Both these resolutions — that is Mr. Job's and Mr. Penney's — concern trade and tariffs and commercial agreements between the two countries. At the conference which was held with the government by the delegation from this Convention, the government expressed this opinion: "Upon the question raised in clause 1 of the resolution respecting steps for establishing an economic or fiscal relationship between the United States and Newfoundland, your committee was informed that this question was one for negotiation between governments through the regular diplomatic channels and that it was doubtful whether the subject matter of the clause

came within the terms of reference of the National Convention".²

That was the government's views on the matter. With their view I am not particularly concerned this afternoon. I have to decide for myself as to whether the resolution itself comes within the terms of the National Convention, because our powers must be confined to that Convention Act. It is the act which gives us the powers we have, whatever they may be. Unless I can find words in that Convention Act which will enable us to receive a motion of this kind or act upon it, I shall have to rule against the resolution. I have given considerable thought to the matter, and I am unable to read into that Convention Act any power to deal with matters of trade or matters of tariffs. We are a fact-finding body, our activities being confined to ascertaining the present position of the country, estimating her future prospects, and discussing forms of government, but obviously we have no power to do anything about trade concessions or tariff agreements. That is within the jurisdiction of the government only, and we are not a government. I must therefore rule out that resolution.... I know that some of the members of this Convention feel very strongly on this subject, and in view of the fact that this Convention is a rather extraordinary body, I am inclined to think that perhaps in certain instances we may be justified in taking extraordinary steps.

This Convention will presumably die sometime within the next few months, and I do not think it is ever likely to be resurrected. I do not mean the individual members of the Convention will pass beyond the pale, but the Convention itself will go into history and remain there; I am not disposed unduly to restrict the endeavours of the Convention, and for that reason, while I am

¹Above, p. 281.

²Volume II:446.