

history; because if he is at all impartial or fair-minded, he must inevitably come to the same conclusions.

First, let us consider why Newfoundland should have lost responsible government at all. Let us ask ourselves why we, of all the British dominions, should have suddenly had the control of our country taken from the hands of its people and passed over to those of outsiders. If we read the Amulree Report ... we will find in that document many strange and peculiar statements, made by men who had been sent here at the instance of the British government, none of whom, as far as I have been aware, had set eyes on this country in their whole lifetime. I found in this report many harsh, reckless statements about our living and our dead. I found an amazing distortion of facts and figures, obviously all directed to justify that final condemnation and judgement which was to put Newfoundland democracy to death and condemn our people to a national debtors' prison for an indefinite term of years. I asked myself, could such a harsh judgement be justified? Was there, perhaps, some reasons which I could not perceive or understand which would justify this pillaging of those political liberties for which our forefathers had struggled so valiantly and so long and which, for over 80 years, had made this island of ours the freest land in the world? I wanted to know what was the underlying reason as to why this should come to a disgraceful end on a dark winter's day in February 1934, at the dictates of a handful of outsiders.

I asked, "Why did this thing happen to us?" In what respect had we been wanting? What had we failed to do, or in what qualities were we, as a people, so deficient as to disqualify us from governing our very own land? Was it that Newfoundlanders had neither the mental capacity, the executive ability or the vision to govern themselves? To answer this question, let your minds travel with me back through the pages of our long island story and recall and estimate the calibre of men who figured in our public life — men whose names I need not speak, for these names speak for themselves. The records of their greatness are ploughed deep into the soil of our national history, their names stand out like mountain tops on the dim horizons of our yesterdays. Would they have us believe that these men were not pos-

sessed of the qualities of leadership? Do not their lives and their actions serve as a denial of such an assumption? Well do we know the path they travelled was no easy one. No lush revenues nor \$40 million budget was theirs to make smooth the rough paths of the country's beginnings, to make the job of statesmen something within the mentality of intelligent office boys. Yet we see them in the face of the monstrous handicaps of small revenues and a numerically insignificant population, measuring up to their task of being both pioneers and statesmen. To them there was the task of not merely having to run a country, they had first to build one. And the fact that we sit here representing some 325,000 people is perhaps the best evidence that they succeeded and built better than they knew; that out of the harsh wilderness of the past they had hewn the solid foundation of our present, our mines, forests, fisheries, roads, and railway. For every single industry that we have with us today, we have to look back in thanks and lay our tribute on the honoured graves of these great Newfoundlanders of the past. Executive ability, you say — leadership, capacity to run a country! Why, if these giants of the past were here today and were asked to take over this country and look after it and its people, they would regard it as mere child's play. And at the same time they would smile at us, half in pity, half in contempt, at the timidity and fear which some of us express when asked to face up to the responsibility of running our own house. No, sir, the records of our people just won't bear out the truth of those who say that we are not now, nor were we in the past, capable of running our own affairs. Our history gives the denial, written in letters too large and too brilliant to make any such statements acceptable to the minds of real Newfoundlanders.

But, you may say, even if we are competent, have we as a people the courage, the endurance, the ambition to govern ourselves? And was it because we lacked these things that we lost our government? Again let us look at the record: we find that if there is anything for which we Newfoundlanders can claim a pride, it is for the courage of our people. Indeed, we find that perhaps more than any other single people in the world, Newfoundlanders, if they would live and survive, had to live with the spirit of courage. It is a spirit which sits with the fisherman in the