

and in consequence, through continued borrowings, our public debt rose by leaps and bounds; when we ran out of cash, we simply borrowed more, thus sending our costs of government soaring. When we could not borrow more, then came the grand finale — no credit, no cash to pay our bills, resulting in loss of responsible government and the inauguration of Commission of Government. It must be conceded that some of our troubles were caused by world depression, but I think the Amulree Report intimated that not a few of our troubles were caused by incompetence on the part of our own governments. We did not like that report, which may or may not have been exaggerated in some particulars, but at least it was a report from a highly competent body of men who made an independent enquiry, and reported as they found.

We are now giving the people the choice of going back to the same kind of government we had prior to 1934, with all its failings; the kind of government which will probably carry on in the old tradition, fill positions in the civil service from the ranks of party heelers, irrespective of their abilities, who would only hold office during the tenure of that particular party, and then out; give old supporters a job for a couple of years, and then pension them with a good retirement allowance; in other words, upset the system the Commission of Government has gone to some pains to inaugurate in our civil service during the past 14 years. We will also have our old system of indirect taxation, a system which gives us a good revenue when prices of imported commodities are high, and the people find it hard to survive.

In fine, Mr. Chairman, under responsible government we have the glorious privilege of having our very own independent system of government; but can we afford this? Can we hope to stand alone, and still afford our people and the comparable standard of life as enjoyed by the peoples of the American continent? It has been said, and I think truly, that Newfoundland might carry on under responsible government if the people were satisfied to have a lower standard of living than that of the peoples I have already mentioned. The electors should give this particular form of government due consideration, and a lot of serious thought before supporting it.

The second form of government mentioned in

the motion is the present one, Commission of Government. This administration has, in my opinion, done a good job generally speaking; it is not an ideal form of government to have permanently; it has the disadvantage of being a system of taxation without representation, a system that has caused untold troubles in the world, a system that lost the American colonies to Britain, and was probably the cause of the war in South Africa. In Newfoundland it has probably outlived its usefulness, and I think the time has arrived to take more of our responsibilities on our own shoulders. But let us give credit where credit is due, the Commission of Government has done some good work during its tenure of office; it has been an honest administration, it has undoubtedly put the civil service on a more businesslike basis than any of our own governments ever did; it has given our young people a better opportunity to advance in that service, and to feel that their positions do not rely on changes of government. It has increased our social services in the matter of health services and education, although much still remains to be done. It has endeavoured to give us good roads, though undoubtedly they overdeveloped the fisheries. It must be conceded that they had large revenues to accomplish all this, but it also shows they had the will to do it. They may have made mistakes, but who doesn't? We should at least be thankful to the British government and the Commission of Government for the conduct of our affairs during the past 14 years.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, I feel it is my duty as a member of this Convention, knowing that some of our people wish it, to support the motion before the Chair, and give them the opportunity to support either of the two forms of government mentioned, should they so desire, at the same time reserving my right as an individual to question whether either of them would be in the best interests of our country.

Mr. Bailey Mr. Chairman, with regard to every minor and major event in this world there comes a time when, to use a nautical expression, "this is the pay-off", the meaning of that term being "a coming to an end". I can say for myself and a large number of members in this Convention, with cheerful hearts, the *Evening Telegram* notwithstanding, in retrospect one can see the mistakes, but that is nothing. We can profit by it.