

to write an account for the papers tomorrow, or if I were a radio commentator expected to go on the air tonight and describe this debate, I think that, with my knowledge of this country, I would be deeply impressed by the debate of yesterday and today. To hear 40-odd men, elected from 37 districts, come in and bear out a united and unanimous story of neglect of roads that once existed and have disappeared, that have been washed away by the floods and storms, and have had practically no money spent on them for a dozen years, I think I would be deeply impressed by the fact that here is an island which, except for a few highroads, is practically without roads, and I would not feel in the least like ridiculing the elected representatives from those districts. I would know enough about the conditions of this country to know that these members were speaking the views of the 318,000 men, women and children of Newfoundland.

Now, this appendix prepared for us by the Department of Public Utilities describes the new system which the government has brought into existence in the past couple of years for dealing with local roads. I am not disposed to ridicule the scheme the government has worked out. It seems to me that behind this plan of working up these local road boards, of which we now have about 400 involving, I suppose, between 400 and 500 settlements, there is something more than merely forming committees to handle local roads. Behind it is a plan to get the people of Newfoundland to take a more active part and interest in the public affairs of their country. It may turn out, when all ... the reports have been considered by this small batch of Newfoundlanders, that we will recommend some form of elected government, or it may turn out that we will recommend that we go right on under Commission government, we don't know yet. Let us say that we recommend some form of elected government. What gentleman in this chamber today, or out of it, would be willing to be a member of that government of the future, knowing that there were 1,300 settlements with, at the present time, 3,000 miles of local road (that's only a guess) which have to be taken care of? What member would wish to be a member of a government, if that government had to find every dollar to keep up those 3,000 miles of local roads? I feel that no one would want to do that.

For that reason I am delighted to see an effort made to work up these local road committees, not merely for the sake of getting the people interested in their own local affairs with regard to roads and bridges, but also for getting these same people more actively interested in public affairs generally. One of the weaknesses of this country in the past has been the fact that we had in Newfoundland only one government, namely the central government in the city of St. John's. They tell me that you cannot get more than 60 miles from the salt water anywhere in Newfoundland. But from St. John's to some parts of this country it might as well be 2-3,000 miles. This means that St. John's and the government here know practically nothing of what goes on in the country. If you are going to have democracy and efficient government, you have got to enlist the people of the country in it, and to do that they have at least made a beginning in the formation of these road committees. I know it is pitiful to think of \$109,000 voted by the government to assist these local road committees. It only scratches the surface of the problem, but it is a beginning. I hope that people in the settlements where they still have no local road committees, as they listen in to these broadcasts, many of them finding out, maybe for the first time, that there is a way in which they can get a few dollars from the government, I hope that they also will get awake and active and form their road committees. Who knows but that these local road committees may some day develop into a first class form of local government.

I will say that this Convention is supposed to consider not only roads, but everything else, in the light of one great question: will the future government of Newfoundland, whether it be Commission or anything else, be able to balance its budget? If it can't, we are up against it. In trying to decide whether or not the future government can balance its budget we must, whether we like it or not, we must find out as far as we can what the future expenditure of the government has got to be. Now, so far as the Transportation and Communications Committee is concerned, that is exactly what we have been trying to do. In our report on Gander we have told you that so far as we can see, the country is saddled with a loss of \$1 million a year; that as far as the Railway is concerned, a loss of \$1.5 million a year. So far as