

certainly favour responsible government in some amended form, a much simplified form, more suitable to our conditions.

In spite of what I have stated, however, I feel I would not be doing my duty if I did not suggest that the electorate would be very well advised to carefully consider before marking their ballot the possible advisability of waiting a few years more before taking a leap in the dark, and diving again into the dangerous waters of the old form of responsible government, at a time when the whole world is so very seriously upset politically and economically. I am not definitely advising this course, but I do believe that the electorate should take it very seriously into consideration when they come to mark their ballots.

Now sir, I am going to suggest that it should be recommended in our report that in the event of the electorate possibly deciding in favour of a continuation of Commission government for a few years, some machinery should be immediately set up in the form of a royal commission, or a special committee, whose duty it would be to spend the next few years endeavouring to formulate an improvement upon our old form of responsible government with a view to making it more suitable for our peculiar needs, and also in studying the confederation issue. I have often wondered, Mr. Chairman, whether in actual fact party government is necessary at all in a small community like ours. There is no party spirit or division in our St. John's Municipal Council, although there is lots of bickering and difference of opinion; they seem to do very well under the chairmanship of a mayor who, whatever his faults may be, has a singularity of purpose in his devotion to his job of administering, with the assistance of his councillors, the affairs of our city to the best advantage, financially and otherwise. There is room for thought in this.

This royal commission or committee which I have suggested would, I hope, also study the practicability of forming some arrangement under which Great Britain, Canada and the USA would take a joint interest in our affairs, for reasons which I have many times pointed out. It is probably not generally known at this Convention that the USA and the United Kingdom set aside, at the time they were taking over certain bases in the Caribbean and West Indian districts, a large sum of money to be spent on satisfying

the people of that region that they were going to take a special interest in their affairs in return for the concessions granted, with a view to improving the standards of living in these areas. This is being administered by what is known as the Caribbean Commission, and I am informed that the Canadian authorities have been also co-operating with it. The amount of money set aside for the purpose was large, many millions of dollars. I believe the committee is still sitting and has not yet concluded its work. Is not this a precedent for Great Britain, the USA and Canada to get together to see whether our people are not entitled to some consideration with a view to the improvement of our standard of living, in return for the concessions which Newfoundland has also yielded for the benefit of those countries and of democracy in general? The royal commission or committee which I have suggested might, perhaps, also act as a link between the Commission of Government and the people of Newfoundland. The absence of such a link has been one of the causes of dissatisfaction with the Commission.

I am not unconscious of the fact that the amounts at present being expended by the Commission appear to be extravagant and I have no doubt that this is giving serious worry to our Commissioners. If a responsible government takes over at an early date, this worry will be transferred to their shoulders, and if I were a party politician, I would hesitate before taking on the job of reducing this expenditure and thereby, perhaps, reducing the efficiency of social and other services to our people. A part of our surplus is certainly disappearing in consequence of the necessity of advancing part of our own dollar surplus to provide payment in dollars to our fishermen for their produce, but to be fair to the Commission, it is reasonable to ask, what would a responsible government do in such a case?

I cannot wholeheartedly support Mr. Higgins' motion as it stands, but would support it wholeheartedly with a slight amendment limiting the continuance of Commission government to, say, four years, and with the hope that a provision would be made that if a renewal of Commission of Government should be the choice of the people, then a royal commission or something of that sort, with economic experts thereon, would be appointed to further investigate and report upon: