

should meet at the call of the Chairman. Section 6 is very important. It is one thing to ask questions; another thing to get information. In order that this be done as speedily as possible we have asked the Commission of Government to provide an official in each department to assist the committees and in that way will facilitate the obtaining of information and save valuable time. You will notice that there has been considerable overlapping in connection with the asking of questions. In order that this may be avoided it is proposed to set up a 'Questions Committee' to which all questions will first be handed. It is not intended to restrict rights to ask questions. We may advise you as to how to change the questions and there may be questions eliminated where there is overlapping, and your questions amplified in order to get the information with greater exactitude. The Commission has agreed and is anxious to facilitate us in every way. I move that this report be received.

Mr. Hillier I second that motion.

[The motion carried unanimously. The Convention resolved into a committee of the whole. Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the report were approved. Section 5 was read]

Mr. Smallwood Mr. Chairman, in 1934 the Commission of Government system came into Newfoundland, and since then in this country there has been no political action of any kind whatsoever until the holding of the National Convention election. For 12 or 13 years there happened in this country exactly what Mr. Bradley, sitting in this House at the time as leader of the Opposition, forecast would happen. I remember his forecast that one effect of Commission government would be the death of whatever public opinion had existed. For 12 or 13 years in Newfoundland there has been no political action, no political agitation, no political propaganda. That has been a grand thing. At that time I disagreed with Mr. Bradley in private conversation and in my own mind. I thought that what we needed was a political holiday or armistice. We have had it, but we have also had what he forecast — the death of public sentiment. Now that was reflected very considerably in the number of our citizens throughout the island who did not bother to vote on the 21st of June. Sir, this Convention opened on Wednesday a week ago, and I have followed, as I am sure we have all done, the

reports appearing in the daily newspapers and the weeklies, and the nightly broadcasts on the two stations, of the meetings of this Convention; and, as others have done, I have tried to visualise what was happening throughout the island. I was trying to picture in my mind hundreds of families around the island sitting in their homes listening to the broadcasts of the events of the Convention of that day. That has gone on now for a week and two days, and it has been good stuff, it has been suggestive and informative, but it has all had to do with public affairs and that is to the good. What is needed in this country is a great revival of interest in public affairs, and I do not mean politics. God forbid. This section 5 would have the effect of closing down the general assembly of the Convention, and setting up as its only substitute very valuable work on the part of nine committees. A practical idea, a useful idea, and a necessary idea that these nine committees should be set up, entirely right that these practical topics should be tackled in that way, and I agree completely; but it seems to me, and it means no more to me than it does to the members of the Steering Committee or to any member of the Convention, a pity that after seven or eight nights only of practical, informative and even brilliant broadcasts, reaching perhaps 200,000 of our people nightly for eight nights, arousing the public interest in public affairs, that after eight nights it should thus be abruptly cut off and for three or four weeks they should hear no more about the National Convention. The suggestion was made, but I don't see it in this section, I think, sir, by you, the thought of meeting once a week in general assembly. That is not mentioned here. It is intended that the Convention should adjourn until called together by the Chairman at the instance of the Steering Committee, except that on Tuesday we do meet in private session to meet the commissioner.

Mr. Chairman I think you rather misapprehend the effect of this inquiry. It is not the intention of the Steering Committee to recommend that the Convention adjourn indefinitely, but while members are at work it is impossible to have a session of the Convention; but as the work progresses and they are in a condition to report to the Convention, the Convention will immediately re-assemble.

Mr. Smallwood The work of these committees