

us in public?

Mr. Chairman That is right.

Mr. Smallwood Is not that in connection with questions?

Mr. Chairman They just laid it down.

Mr. Smallwood Tomorrow is merely a review by the commissioner of the position of Newfoundland as he sees it; it is merely a formal address.

Mr. Chairman Without interrogation, you mean. It further has to be remembered that it was not the intention, of the United Kingdom government to have officials of the government subjected to examination by this Convention. That is a definite statement.

Mr. Smallwood That is face to face?

Mr. Chairman I do not know whether it is face to face or otherwise; but it was not intended that officials of government should be examined by this Convention. Furthermore the Commission of Government have stated that, whereas or whilst it is willing and most anxious to afford this Convention, and through this Convention the public at large, the fullest possible information which properly can be and should be disclosed, and is further prepared to meet the Convention as a committee of the whole, but only in private and not in public sessions....

Mr. Jackman Who drew up the National Convention Act?

Mr. Chairman The National Convention Act was passed by the legislative authority of this country. I do not think you can go beyond or past that. We are faced with facts and we cannot do anything about it. We are bound by the terms of reference under that authority. We are faced with an unalterable fact. We cannot compel people to come here....

Mr. Vardy The commissioners are appointees of the home government. We have no jurisdiction over them. I think we should accept the facts. We cannot dictate to them. They are still in office.

Mr. Butt I do not think it is a matter of dictating to the Commission, but we should ask them for a reconsideration with a different spirit. If we dictated to them they would probably dictate back. If we approach them in the spirit that we want to get the best we can for this country, they may be willing to reconsider it. I suggest further we are discussing a time-honoured problem, one that has been handled on many occasions. If a minister

comes before the public he gives all the information he can give. That is all we ask.... I suggest we approach them in the spirit of wanting the information we can get, not for ourselves, but for the people of this country, and in that spirit to reconsider the position. If there is information beyond a shadow of doubt not in the public interest, he may withhold it. If I ask a minister a certain question and he says, "I cannot answer that", and I ask him 20 more questions and he still says, "I cannot answer them", I will not take that lying down.

Mr. Jackman I was notified by a commissioner about two years ago on a question put to him that we had no authority to call witnesses. He gave me to understand his authority came from the Dominions Office. I understand this act has been drawn up by the Commission. If that is so, by what authority are we acting? What I want to bring out is that if the commissioners refuse to meet us in public, let us have them removed and others put in. Secondly, the Dominions Office should be contacted and asked if it is not possible to have the commissioners attend here and give us what we want in public. The Commission of Government is not a secret organisation, nor are we a secret body. Every matter to be dealt with here should get the fullest possible ventilation.

Mr. Bradley We had better face the facts. This Convention has no authority to compel anyone, commissioner or no commissioner, whether he be Mr. Wild or Mr. Jones or Captain Murphy of one of our sealing steamers, we have no authority to compel anybody. That being the case we can only ask, and if he lays down conditions upon which he will come, we have to comply with the conditions.

Mr. Chairman I will have to ask for a motion to suspend the rules if you desire to discuss this matter — i.e. the rule in relation to members talking more than once — so as to regularise the discussion. I do not want to shut off the discussion, but we will have to regularise it, in order to allow free expression.

Mr. Brown I have not spoken on this matter before, but it seems to me that we should cross our bridges when we come to them. If they refuse, then it is time to jump down their throats. If we are bound by that act which you showed us, Mr. Chairman, what is the use of talking about it?

Mr. Cashin The point is Mr. Wild has been in-