

years, in some things 100 years, behind the times. We live more poorly, more shabbily, more meanly. Our life is more a struggle. Our struggle is tougher, more naked, more hopeless. In the North American family Newfoundland bears the reputation of having the lowest standards of life, of being the least progressive and advanced of the whole family.

We all love this land. It has a charm that warms our hearts, go where we will: a charm, a magic, a mystical tug on our emotion that never dies. With all her faults we love her. But a metamorphosis steals over us the moment we cross the border that separates us from other lands. As we leave Newfoundland our minds undergo a transformation. We expect, and we take for granted, a higher, a more modern way of life such as it would have seemed ridiculous or even avaricious to expect at home. And as we return to Newfoundland we leave that higher standard behind, and our minds undergo a reverse transformation. We have grown so accustomed to our own lower standards and more antiquated methods and old-fashioned conveniences that we readjust ourselves unconsciously to the meaner standards under which we grew up. We are so used to our railway and our coastal boats that we scarcely see them; so used to our settlements, and roads, and homes, and schools, and hospitals and hotels and everything else that we do not even see their inadequacy, their backwardness, their seaminess.

We have grown up in such an atmosphere of struggle, of adversity, of mean times that we are never surprised, certainly never shocked, when we learn that we have one of the highest rates of tuberculosis in the world; one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world; one of the highest maternity-mortality rates in the world; one of the highest rates of beri-beri and rickets in the world. We take these shocking facts for granted. We take for granted our lower standards, our poverty. We are not indignant about them: we save our indignation for those who publish such facts, for with all our complacency, with all our readiness to receive, to take for granted, and even to justify these things amongst ourselves, we are, strange to say, angry and hurt when these shocking facts become known to the outside world.

We are all very proud of our Newfoundland people. We all admire their strength, their skill,

their adaptability, their resourcefulness, their industry, their frugality, their sobriety, and their warm-hearted, simple generosity. We are proud of them; but are we indignant, does our blood boil, when we see the lack of common justice with which they are treated? When we see how they live? When we witness the long, grinding struggle they have? When we see the standards of their life? Have we compassion in our hearts for them? Or are we so engrossed, so absorbed, in our own struggle to live, in this country, that our social conscience has become toughened, even case-hardened? Has our own hard struggle to realise a modest competence so blinded us that we have little or no tenderness of conscience left to spare for the fate of the tens of thousands of our brothers so very much worse off than ourselves?

Mr. Chairman, in the present and prospective world chaos, with all its terrible variety of uncertainty, it would be cruel and futile, not that the choice is ours, to influence the handful of people who inhabit this small island to attempt independent national existence. The earnings of our 65,000 families may be enough, in the years ahead, to support them half-decently and at the same time support the public services of a fair-size municipality. But will those earnings support independent national government on an expanding, or even the present scale? Except for a few years of this war and a few of the last, our people's earnings never supported them on a scale comparable with North American standards, and never maintained a government, even on the pre-war scale of service. Our people never enjoyed a good standard of living, and never were able to yield enough taxes to maintain the government. The difference was made up by borrowing or grants-in-aid.

We can indeed reduce our people's standard of living; we can force them to eat and wear and use and have much less than they have; and we can deliberately lower the level of governmental services. Thus we might manage precariously to maintain independent national status. We can resolutely decide to be poor but proud. But if such a decision is made it must be made by the 60,000 families who would have to do the sacrificing, not the 5,000 families who are confident of getting along pretty well in any case.

We have, I say, a perfect right to decide that