

vention that the main choice we as a people have to make is this: "Do we want to be governed by others, or do we want to govern ourselves?" If we decide we want to govern ourselves, then the way lies open at any future date, if we are so minded, to enter into union with one of the larger countries to the west of us.

I do not agree with the opinion expressed in this Convention that people don't care what kind of government they have, so long as they have a full belly. I know that isn't true; it is in opposition to the history of mankind. Economic freedom does not come before political freedom, it is the other way about. Today all over the world, political freedom is the goal of all men — white, yellow and black. Are we to be any less than those? We, who for our size and population are in an economic and strategic position today that many peoples can truly envy?

Now, I made the statement that Newfoundland was never quite free, never wholly independent. What did I mean by this? Simply that while Newfoundland was theoretically under responsible government managing her own affairs, in reality, in the last analysis, Great Britain had the final say on any matters affecting the extra-territorial activities of this country. Hence, amongst other things, the blocking of the Bond-Blaine reciprocity treaty, when Canada went over Newfoundland's head to Great Britain, with the known results. Things have greatly changed since then, and there is in existence what is known as the Statute of Westminster, enacted in 1931 in relation to the dominions, of which Newfoundland was one in 1931, and still is, though with suspended status, as you yourself, Mr. Chairman have written in an excellent article published some years ago in the *Book of Newfoundland*, edited by Mr. Smallwood.¹ I have just been reading a very good book on the Statute of Westminster and its application to the various dominions, including Newfoundland, written by no less a person than our mutual friend and former constitutional expert to this Convention, Professor K.C. Wheare, whose whereabouts are still something of a mystery to most of us.² Now it would appear that in the interval between the conference of 1930 and the introduction of the

Statute of Westminster into the House of Commons, Newfoundland requested the insertion of a clause postponing the application of sections 2 - 6 of the statute to Newfoundland until its parliament adopted any or all of these sections. Section 3 of these postponed clauses reads as follows: "3. it is hereby declared and enacted that the Parliament of a Dominion has full power to make laws having extra-territorial operation." That means, as I understand it, that if a responsible government of Newfoundland passed in its legislature that section of the Statute of Westminster, by and with the consent of the people, it could then be free to negotiate a trade or other agreement, a reciprocity treaty on the lines of the Bond-Blaine treaty, and there could be no interference by Britain, or by Canada through Britain. That is the clue to our future solution of our trade relations with the United States.

Now the position of the Commission of Government with relation to the Statute of Westminster is worth noting:

In the new constitution, issued in letters patent under the authority of this act, the former bicameral parliament of Newfoundland was abolished, and power to make laws for the peace, welfare, and good government of Newfoundland was transferred to the Governor, acting with the advice and consent of the Commission of Government. But although the Governor and Commission were empowered to amend, add to, or repeal any law passed by the legislature heretofore existing, it was nowhere stated that they were to be deemed to possess all the powers of that legislature, nor were they described as a legislature or parliament. It may be argued therefore, that no parliament exists to exercise the powers conferred by the Statute of Westminster upon 'the Parliament of a Dominion', and that the adoption of sections 2 - 6 of the Statute is impossible so long as this system of government by commission exists. In law Newfoundland would appear to be a dominion still (though in name only), since section 1 of the statute extends to Newfoundland, and has not been amended to omit the name of Newfoundland, and section 11,

¹ John B. McEvoy, "Our New Constitution", in J.R. Smallwood (ed.), *The Book of Newfoundland*, Vol. 1 (St. John's, 1937), pp. 43-46.

² Kenneth C. Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status* (Oxford, 1947).