

Smallwood or by others as a solution for the difficulties of the poor broken-down island of Newfoundland between the years 1934-40, instead of now, when she is financially independent, economically strong, and possessed of vast potential resources and a great strategic importance?

I do not see either how the British government, whose policy in all parts of the world is to give control of their own affairs to whatever peoples of the Empire seek them, can encourage Newfoundlanders to retain the present dictatorial system, particularly in view of the straitened circumstances of Great Britain at the present time; and this would tend to give some credence to the belief still held in many quarters, despite the rather ambiguous answer received to the Hon. Mr. Job's question, that the commission form may not yet appear on the ballot paper; or that a statement of Great Britain's inability to finance the system may be issued coincident with the holding of the referendum. I think it is also right to point out that at the present time the Commission of Government does not hold office by the will of the people. However, if at the referendum it should be voted into power, it would then be in the position of a popular legislature, of a kind, and possessed of the authority to put this country into union with another country.

The foundation for the presumed solid entrenchment of the Commission government in our midst is the argument that they have extended our social services. That, it would seem, is the only argument. Yet, as I have pointed out, this was not commenced in actuality until 1941, and the various reports of the committees of this Convention which went thoroughly into these matters, all indicate that up to 1941 the policy was to make both ends meet and no more, and that all extensions of such services were coincident with the influx of money from the United States and elsewhere. So their achievement is that they spent money, a lot of money, since 1941. It is fair to draw the conclusion, based on their policy of the years from 1934 to 1941, that but for the war that money would not have been spent, because they would not have had it to spend. When that money is all gone, as it will be very soon at the present rate of spending, what can we in this country expect? Surely we do not believe that Great Britain, a rich country before the war, which

could only allow the Commission of Government enough money to pay the interest to the British bondholders while Newfoundland itself balanced its own accounts out of its own revenues, surely we do not believe that Great Britain, a country in dire straits after the war, can give us financial aid to support the present system of government and the services which we will be expected to maintain? Of course we don't!

What then? This Convention has now reached the end of its deliberations. A few days ago the final and conclusive Report of the Finance Committee on the Economic Position of Newfoundland was adopted unanimously by the members, thus acknowledging that the country is self-supporting, and has been for several years, and is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future — for three years at least. On that basis the present resolution is before the Chair: "Be it therefore resolved that this Convention recommend to the United Kingdom government that the wishes of the people of Newfoundland should be ascertained at the earliest moment as to whether they wish to return to the form of responsible government or retain the present form of Commission of Government", or words to that effect.

I intend to vote for this resolution, as I believe most, if not all of the delegates here will do also. But I want to make it quite clear that I am voting for this resolution because it is the only thing I can do. The 1933 Act says that responsible government on the request of the people will be restored. That is, the people must express their desire for its return, as against a desire to retain the present Commission. Since they have not as yet in any concrete form expressed that desire, they will be given a referendum; the matter will be referred to them for their decision.

I want to make it quite clear and have it go in the record, Mr. Chairman, in case it's not already clear, that I am not in favour of the commission system. I never was, long before I came to this Convention. It was repugnant to me, because of the things I had learned and come to understand. It would be false to all the beliefs and ideals I have ever held or followed, if I were to recommend its retention to our people in this crisis, as we stand in the open doorway of a beckoning and wonderful future. I have stated on every occasion that constitutional matters were discussed in this Con-