

happy and pleased to hear you sitting in your seat.
Mr. Job That's very kind and thoughtful, sir, and I think I'll probably avail myself of your suggestion, if I may.

Mr. Chairman Certainly, sir.

Mr. Job I desire to make a few remarks with regard to the Ottawa proposals. I wish first of all to make it absolutely clear that I'm not in principle against confederation, nor am I an anticonfederate, as suggested since by Mr. Smallwood to the Canadian press. I don't want to be unkind, but that's the fact. In order to avoid any misunderstanding as to the position I take in connection with the confederation issue, let me say that it was my view that unless the advantages and disadvantages of confederation with Canada are very clearly set forth, the electorate will not be placed in a position to fairly weigh the issue. And the outcome of the decision is so far-reaching and irretrievable that a snap judgement might be fatal for the future of our country. I doubt very much whether the disjointed debate which has gone out over the air from the Convention has conveyed any idea of the true position on this issue. In spite of the voluminous, valuable but still very incomplete information contained in the so-called Black Books compiled as the result of three months' discussions in Ottawa, the situation is far from clear. I'd like to say in that connection, that I'm not at all sure that those gentlemen who were suggesting the return of the delegation from Ottawa should not have advised them to stop there for another six months; because they could not in the time be expected to bring about a thorough, clear picture. The position is very far from being clear, and it is evident that it cannot possibly be made clear to the Convention delegates or to the electorate prior to the termination of the Convention's proceedings, assuming that our deliberations are to end this month and that the referendum will be held in May. The question therefore arises as to whether or not this Convention is justified in recommending that such incomplete information should be placed before the people of Newfoundland for an irrevocable decision at the present time.

The very ardent advocate and/or advocates of confederation may contend that this is merely an attempt to shelve forever the question of confederation. But I cannot accept that idea, as it is perfectly clear that should a referendum covering

responsible government or Commission government result in favour of responsible government, a general election would then be held. And there would then be an opportunity for those who favour confederation to form a party and contest the issue. If the confederation party were elected, they would then be in a position to pursue negotiations for confederation. It must be kept in mind that up to the present time there have been no negotiations, but merely a statement of Ottawa's views as to a fair and equitable basis. Newfoundland's views as to a fair and equitable basis has not yet been formulated. It may be argued that in the case of the choice being Commission instead of responsible government there would not be a chance of considering the confederation issue. I do not think that is necessarily correct. Presumably the continuation of Commission government, if placed on the paper, will be with a limit of perhaps three or four years. And if that is the case, the government might be asked to set up a royal commission to endeavour to set forth more clearly the advantages and disadvantages to Newfoundland of union with Canada. As an alternative to a royal commission, the idea expressed by Mr. Pratt, chairman of the Newfoundland Industrial Board, might be adopted and the government might arrange for an expert economic survey of our position which would include details on the impact of confederation with Canada on our future prosperity. There should be no hurry to decide such an irretrievable step as the confederation issue. The electorate must be absolutely clear as to its effect before voting on it. We have not yet got all the facts by a very long way.

Now, sir, I wish to emphasise that Mr. Smallwood must have been aware of the views I have just expressed before he sent that despatch to the Canadian newspapers. I made them clear on 6 December last through the local press. I do not take it lightly that Mr. Smallwood would let anything of importance go in the newspaper. However, I will forgive this indiscretion and call it a politician's license to discourage an opponent. There is probably no one in this assembly who takes a more independent view than I do upon the subject which we have been sent here to discuss. I offered myself as candidate without any expectation of future political associations, which is easily imaginable in view of my age and