

gins, Ashbourne, Smallwood, Job, Burry and Ballam as members of the delegation, with Messrs. Crummey and Starkes as first and second alternates. Those in favour please say "aye", con-

trary "nay" — motion carried.

*[The committee of the whole rose and reported the election of the delegation. The Convention adopted the report]*

### Report of the Public Health and Welfare Committee:<sup>1</sup> Committee of the Whole

**Mr. Starkes** ....I would like to make it plain to the people of this country about the old age pension of fishermen. They are entitled to an old age pension when they get to 75 years even if they are earning up to \$25 a month, and even if they have up to \$400 in the bank. That is something I don't think the majority of the people in this country realised before, at least in our region. I am speaking from experience because there are several in that district who applied for the pension and have been turned down on that account. I would like them to understand that they can legally get it.

**Mr. Hillier** I am in the same boat as Mr. Starkes. I mentioned quite recently that I had a letter from my district — Lamaline — on the old age pensions, and by reason of the fact that this man had a small amount of money through selling some property he was denied that pension.

**Mr. Vincent** I would refer you for a moment to page 22 of the report: "To be eligible for the pension a man must have passed the age of 75. On his death his widow receives \$18 per quarter if she has reached the age of 65 years." I submit that this old age pension scheme needs revision. I regret that no practical recommendations to this effect are to be found in this otherwise very fine report. It seems just tragic that so little consideration is given the honest, hard-working fisherman and his wife, who for years have toiled and slaved at their calling to give us this heritage of Newfoundland. I am not proud, I feel ashamed that these fishermen who have spent 30 or 40 years at the cod fishery, and sometimes years at the seal fishery as well, should derive so little from their labour. Something is wrong, something should be done by the people that legislate in this country. I submit that your Committee would have been justified in bringing in, and I am sure this Convention would have approved of it, a recommendation to lower the age limit to 65 or at least 70 years, and augment the pension, or double it from the amount it is now. My friends have no bank

accounts, and very little life insurance, but by the grace of God and the apparent hardihood of your race, if you live to be 75 then your very grateful country may recognise your years of service and hardship and patriotism, and you will get for the rest of your days the magnificent sum of 19 and 3/4 cents per day!

**Mr. Jones** Mr. Chairman, I have not spoken to this report because I would rather listen to the next fellow and get his ideas. I see that \$1 million has been spent for dole this year.

It was stated here yesterday that a man in need did not have as much trouble in some districts as he did in others to get relief. I wonder why? In speaking of relieving officers I know they have instructions from the Department of Public Health and Welfare to keep down expenses, and I also know they have instructions to see that no man starves. I wonder how far on that road of starvation does a man have to go before he can get a note from the officer to relieve him from that starvation? I think that there should be something definite about it. All relieving officers should have their instructions and should treat the people in the same way. I know there are people here who are fasting since this is the Lenten season, but they are not fasting because the Church tells them it is right, but because they have not the food. I know instances of that, and I think there should be something tangible in order that people may get relief.

In speaking of sick people, I wonder what a man has to do when he is sick before he can get relief? I suppose he has to get a note from the doctor, and then when that man recovers how is the relieving officer to know that he is fit to work to cut off the funds?

**Mr. Ashbourne** In reply to Mr. Jones, the department has set up outport representatives known as relieving officers, to whom any man who is in need can apply. When these men, whether sick or poor or destitute, apply to the relieving officer he gets in touch with the depart-

<sup>1</sup>Volume II:251.