

They are home now working their souls out to get a bit of wood for the winter. Altogether, their income for the year will be anywhere between \$550 and \$750 a year. I can assure the people in this House that if there is no fish caught next year there will not be any money spent on the roads, either on Avalon Peninsula or transinsular roads, although I believe in them. We have got to get the fishermen of this country on a paying standard. I am going to take this up later when the Fishery Report comes in. We must see that the fishermen can earn the money so that the politicians will be able to go ahead and do those things. That's where I stand. I concur, to use Professor Wheare's word, with Mr. Higgins, and I am sure that nobody in this world was treated worse than we were.

We had a large amount of money, about \$6,000, spent in 1938 on the roads from Victoria Village<sup>1</sup> down. Last year a Plymouth truck tried to get over those roads and could not. On the \$223,000 road from Heart's Content to Whitbourne, cars could not get through. When you get to Winterton hill you get some men to take a rope, put your car off the road and attach the rope, and pull the car through the trees, and finally get it on the road again. You might have it stuck for a week or two on that road. When you had responsible government that was a good road. That's what we have been up against.

We have in St. John's 63,000 people, which in comparison with the rural population is out of all proportion. The population of Trinity South has dropped two-thirds in the past few years, and a lot of them are in here. In the spring when the boats came in to load, most everybody got a few days work, and when there was a good harbour and a good wharf it was all right. This is the thing we have been up against — but I don't understand it. That's still the position we are faced with. Today you have got to go 49 or 50 miles before you can connect with anything at all. I think that the quicker we can change this the better for the country. I believe it would cost \$150,000 to put the branch railroad back in its place. We pleaded with Sir Wilfred Woods, put up every argument possible, but in spite of that the railroad was taken away from us. I believe the quicker we can get clear of this form of government the better. One thing we want to do is put our house in order, so

that the people who produce the wealth of this country, the fishermen, can make a living. Let us get them earning. If you don't you will be in the same place four years from today as you were six years ago.

**Mr. Northcott** I strongly support Mr. Ashbourne's remarks. There is one bright spot, you know — Lewisporte. The branch line this year brought in a credit balance of \$58,000. Then they took the line away and we had to walk! I think that main line should be swung on to Lewisporte and Norris Arm to save all that unnecessary expense. Lewisporte, though small, is a very progressive little town, second to none as far as taxes and revenue are concerned. It has 1,000 people and we have gone over the \$200,000 mark in revenue alone. When we come to roads we have a trail. Thanks to the local government we have started now; and I hope in the near future it will be more than 25 cents per mile. I therefore go on record that there should be a main line to Lewisporte.

**Mr. Smallwood** I would like to remind Mr. Northcott that it is not quite the case that the Lewisporte branch was the only one that showed a surplus. The Argentia line and the Lewisporte line both show an operating profit, and they are the only ones that do.

I was much interested in what Mr. Bailey said. It is only fair to say this: the government is spending \$2.5 million a year on roads, but if you go back to just before the war and look at what the government spent then on roads and bridges, you will find that in 1938, on the construction of new roads, they spent only \$12,000.... The total amount they spent was only \$480,000, as against \$2.5 million today. The point is that up to 1938 or 1939 we were not paying our way as a country. There was a deficit every year. After that we began to have a surplus, and we have had one every year, and it is only since they have had a surplus, money from the taxpayers, that they spent any real money on roads; but when they were not getting it from us they were only spending \$500,000 dollars on roads each year.

We must get this right. You have people in this country saying, "You would get no roads if you had any other kind of government", but the answer to that is, "We have got no roads and we still have Commission of Government." What

<sup>1</sup>Near Carbonear, Conception Bay.