

did succeed in getting the rates up from 30 to 40 cents. Now I might say in fairness to the Americans over at Stephenville or Harmon Field as they call it, the increase in wages is gone above that this year. It's true there's no organisation here (as I pointed to over in England), that our hands were tied in that deal, the 99-year lease, wherein we were not permitted to organise in what is known as Uncle Sam's or Mr. Truman's land. However, the point I want to get at is that while we try to ridicule the Commission of Government, I don't think the time is right. I've had to deal with a lot of people who were not connected with the Commission of Government. And I also have an order, a letter written by the late Sir Wilfred Woods who did say that he was prepared, his department was prepared, to pay the prevailing rate in any particular area in which they operated. Mr. Chairman, I put it straight that there are places in Newfoundland today paying from 28 to 35 cents per hour while the government is paying 40. Who is to be blamed? That I think is fair. Let's give every man his just due. There are people in this country today who are not connected with Commission of Government but they are paying from 28 to 35 cents while the government is paying 40. That doesn't sound like the Commission of Government's fault. It's about time that some of those people awoke. I've heard a lot of crying about the poor people, the poor fisherman, the poor labourer, yet if you want to do anything for them, give them a fair day's pay, which you can surely pay out of the price of fish and all the rest of it, this last four or five years. I'm not going to keep us any longer because I feel, as I've said before, the time has not come to criticise this form of government or the other. But I would remind those of you who are likely to take the tar brush, remember home first. Set the example at your own door and then the Commission of Government may come up a little bit higher.

Mr. Miller This matter has come home so much that I feel I too have to offer an opinion. When the base contractors came to Argentia there was something more than a question of pay. A base was to be built. They wanted labourers, carpenters, electricians, every classification of labour. We have had sizeable jobs in Newfoundland before: the Humber deal, Corner Brook and Deer Lake construction. They had

certain standards of rate and certain standards of housing....¹ We had hopes as Newfoundlanders down there on that southern coast that similar standards would be employed. Did that come into effect? And who was responsible for it? Now that is the big question. And it would well be to lay the blame in the right place. Is Commission of Government really to blame for that situation or was the American authority in Newfoundland? If Commission of Government is to blame, blame them and thereby we get the correction. But if the American authorities in Newfoundland are to blame, let's not go on blindfolding ourselves by blaming Commission of Government and getting farther away from the issue. That seems to me to be just what is happening. I spoke of the housing conditions. When the first cookhouses were opened up at Argentia, I had personal knowledge of what took place. The purpose of that contractor at that date was to bring contractors, who were used to catering the lumber woods camps, into Argentia to cater and serve the meals to all our different classifications of labour. Now, there were among the workmen there men who wanted meals for 50 cents a day, and men who were content, according to their classification of work, to pay more. But you are all a bunch of Newfoundlanders, and here you are gentlemen, take it or leave it. That's the situation right from the actual scene of operations. I say it because I saw it. I believe that we can lay more blame on the American authorities for all that has gone on than on Commission of Government. And I don't believe in bluffing about it either. Now about this letter. I too have heard about that letter, it really did exist. The American authorities were well established and had many a pay-day over in Argentia on low scale wages and, by the way, I'm informed that the hiring rate of labourers over there is still only 39.5 cents per hour. But they had probably a year or two in over there before Commission of Government forwarded anything. That is my opinion on the matter. But I believe that if we're to find a remedy, we must first find who's to blame.

Mr. Jackman The Commission of Government are to blame, but not directly. They acted as agents for the vested interests in Newfoundland, but nevertheless they acted. They're just as much to blame in one way but, my point is this, that they

¹Gap in the recording.