

to myself, to the country in general and in particular to the people who sent me here to represent their interests.

I say that this Convention should not be kept here dilly-dallying in an atmosphere of questionable motives on the part of the Dominions Office. Nor should delegates be under any misconception as to our actual status. We must realise that we are not in any sense a legislative assembly and that we have no power to make binding decisions. There has been much misguided talk about our far-reaching responsibility, but the fact of the matter is we have no legal responsibility whatever, for the simple reason that the Dominions Office will not permit us to exercise any responsibility. As for the opinions or representations we may present to the Secretary of State for the Dominions, if such do not suit he can and probably will throw them in the waste-paper basket. Our status is simply that of a mock parliament, a discussion group, a study club, and that's where our power and responsibility begins and ends. Under present circumstances the responsibility for Newfoundland's future rests firstly in the hands of the British government, and secondly in the hands of our people themselves, provided they are permitted to vote in a plebiscite authorised by Mr. Attlee. For ourselves, we are simply third parties to the whole transaction. Some people who are as not yet aware of the true nature of this Convention may be surprised to hear me speak of it in what they may regard as a disrespectful manner, but mark my word, and note, that as time goes on, and the true nature of this whole thing emerges from the impressive stage-settings with which it is dressed up, they will fully endorse the sentiments I have expressed today. They will realise that in their dealings with Newfoundland, Mr. Attlee, the Dominions Office, and the local Commission, have stolen the vocabulary of democracy, but they have deliberately sidetracked its spirit and substance.

In view of these opinions, it may be fairly asked why I am prepared to sit in a Convention which I condemn. I am here not in the role of a subservient delegate to a Commission-inspired assembly, but as a free and independent representative of the people whose interests I represent. Anyone who has heard my radio talks, listened to my pre-election speeches can have no

misunderstanding as to my unchanging attitude in this matter. I did not wait until I was elected to condemn this Convention idea. From its first announcement, I have consistently denounced it as being conceived with the deliberate idea of indefinitely prolonging the rule of Commission government in this country. I told the people of my district in St. John's West, that I came before them as a 100% advocate of responsible government; that if they elected me, I would use every effort to see that the Dominions Office and the British government carried out the pledge made to this country in 1933. It is for these things that the people have sent me to this assembly, and I do not intend to fail them. Again, I emphatically condemn the motives which inspired this Convention, and I equally condemn the purposes for which the Dominions Office would use this assembly of Newfoundland representatives. But we have to be realists, we have to make the best of the situation thrust upon us; and, as good sometimes comes out of evil, I at least hope to see in this assembly an opportunity for a long silenced, long subjugated country to recover its voice. I see in it the first opportunity given our people in 14 years to lawfully come together and consider the fate of their common country, and by the personal contacts thereby created to strengthen the bonds of their blood and soil. I see in it an opportunity for giving birth and outlining plans for the freeing of our country from her present state of national dishonour, of laying the cornerstone of a new freedom and making the first advances towards that new and brighter future so long denied and desired by us. And it is with the desire of assisting that I am here today.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, I have been asked to present for your acceptance and consideration a report on the financial and economic position of Newfoundland. In doing so I am not to be regarded as its sponsor. I am performing this service simply as a part of my duty as delegate to this Convention and because I have been requested to do so, with the hope of expediting the work.

This report on Newfoundland has, as usual, neither been compiled nor authored by Newfoundlanders. For the past 12 years, our people have been subjected to consistent propaganda by apologists of the Commission and the Dominions Office, and during that same period the only