

I shall modify that statement, sir. I said "clean, clear" profits. I take back the word "clean". Their profits were clear, but they were not always clean. I wish to choose my words carefully. I want my words to express exactly what I mean. I say that never in history, in this or any country, was any handful of people so looted, so plundered as our people have been since this late war broke out. It was in many cases cold, calculated plunder. If Major Cashin would talk about the plunder by those firms instead of talking about the plunder of the public chest, he would do more good for the people of Newfoundland. They took all the profits the traffic would bear, and all the government would let them take, and in many cases a lot more than the government would allow them to take. I have never heard or read of a handful of people whose pockets were so shamelessly looted as were the pockets of our Newfoundland people during this war. While their sons were offering their very lives for the brave new world they were promised, they themselves were attacked by a looting, monopolistic plutocracy here in Newfoundland.

I will tell you what this late war has done to our country. It has strengthened and solidified our new rich. It has put great fortunes into the hands of some who did not have them before the war, and it has doubled the fortunes of those who did have them before the war. It has drawn the reins of monopoly closer, it has fastened the chains of class domination more securely upon the masses of our people. Our struggling masses have managed to renew the wallpaper in their homes; they have managed to get together a bit more furniture and household utensils, to paint their houses, and generally to do a bit of replenishing. Those of them whose families were not large, and who were not quite so far down when the war broke out, have even managed to lay aside a little modest savings. But the great majority of our people are fast falling back to where they were before the war broke out, back into the same shameful old rut of poverty and insecurity. It has widened the gulf between the people and their economic masters. If the poor have not become absolutely poorer, it certainly cannot be said that the rich have not become richer, for they have become richer. The gulf between them has widened and deepened. And of few countries in

this world today can the poet's words be more truly spoken:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.<sup>1</sup>

This has got to stop. I know our Newfoundland people. I am one of them. I am blood of their blood, bone of their bone, soul of their soul. I am descended from a family that has lived in Newfoundland for over 150 years. My ancestors were fishermen, farmers, shop-keepers, manufacturers, skilled workmen and artisans. I have dug deep into my country's history, and in so doing I have paid special attention to the story of our people's labours, their battles against nature and against injustice, the story of their endless search for a square deal. I have travelled my country, north, east, south and west, into a thousand of the 1,300 settlements in it. I have been closely and intimately associated with our people. I have fished with the fishermen, logged with the loggers; I have gone down underground with the miners; held trade union meetings right inside the paper mills. I was never so close to our toilers as during those years of the dole, and always, so long as I live, I will remember those years of the dole, and always, so long as I live, I will remember those friends of mine, those toilers who were stricken down by beri-beri, those children who felt the pinch of hunger. I saw the heartbreak in the eyes of patient mothers who had not enough to give their little ones. I saw the baffled, sullen rage of fishermen whose greatest toil and endurance could not provide their families with enough to eat or wear. I attended meetings of the unemployed here in St. John's, but who was I to refuse their invitation to go and speak to them? I saw them in their despairing hundreds waiting around the street corners, waiting for the jobs that never turned up, and around the dole office, and helped to gather second-hand clothes to distribute to those who were half-naked, not for a day or a week or a year, but all through the depression. I saw them, and I swore an oath to myself that never would I be a party to allowing such things to come back to our people again. I would never be a party to any form of government that would make us know that thing again, and that's why I became a confederate. I became a confederate and discovered that confederation would give our people a half-decent

<sup>1</sup>Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village," 1769.