

first gave it as my opinion that it was not the assigned task of the Convention to seek a conclusion as to whether or not we are self-supporting. I am still of that opinion.

I grant you that the Letters Patent of 1934 did provide for the administration of Newfoundland until such time as it became self-supporting again. But those Letters Patent were issued under the Great Seal at Westminster. And that locates the headache at Westminster. The burden of proof of self-support — at any rate the decision in the matter — lies with Westminster. And if the British Parliament had decided to foist the responsibility for determination of the question of self-support upon this Convention it would have been written in the Convention Act. No such thing was written into the Convention Act. What we were told to do was examine into the financial and economic changes that have taken place since 1934. The Economic Report before us, undoubtedly not without good reason, has seen fit to go beyond that commitment and bring the matter of whether or not the island is again self-supporting before this assembly. It has gone further and suggests that we are self-supporting.

During the deliberations of the Finance Committee in preparation of the Economic Report, I, together with another member of the Committee, did resign therefrom. By that time it was evident that the other members of the Committee were of one mind upon an approach to the matter in hand with which I was not in accord. Reappointed to the Committee by you, Mr. Chairman, I thought that the Committee would make more rapid progress if I did not attend further meetings. It was just as well that I did not. For to this report in its entirety I would not have been able to subscribe, and my presence at meetings at which it was prepared could only have led to further delays — at a cost to the country of \$1,000 a day....

I see it this way. The proper function of the Economic Report, as is self-evident from the terms of reference of the Convention, is to indicate the economic changes that have taken place in the island since 1934, and as is implicit in those terms of reference, to make such forecast for the foreseeable future as the financial and economic data to hand and the competence of the talent applied to its interpretation make possible. There is a line of demarcation between such an

enterprise and taking a decision as to whether or not we are self-supporting. The Economic Report has crossed that line. It was not wrong for the report to do so. But in doing so the report put a chip on its shoulder and went hunting trouble — perhaps without as much purpose as may have been supposed. The British Parliament has not asked for a decision on the specific question of self-support. That is a decision that it will make for itself — for it has made that condition for itself. To be fair, it must be said that the report did have some justification for addressing itself to the question, in that it was popularly expected to make a pronouncement. Rightly or wrongly, the people have been led to expect this Convention to pronounce upon the matter of self-support.... And I do think that that makes the matter of self-support legitimate for our concern. In that belief I have already discussed the matter in Convention. And in that belief, now that this report has formally brought the matter before this Convention, I intend to discuss it further today. However, I cannot see that any useful purpose is served by the estimate of revenue and expenditure for the next three years. For such an estimate to have any credibility it would have to be predicated upon a more accurate measure of our economy than was possible.

To begin with, there is not in the Convention anyone equipped with the specialised knowledge necessary for making a conclusive evaluation of the present condition and the potential of our economy. And even if there had been elected a composite financial wizard and mathematical genius, it is an open question just how far he could have gone in that direction. For he would have had available to him few reliable statistical indices, no reliable figure of national income, hardly any basis aggregates upon which to predicate a conclusion that would be much more than a good guess. One of the most urgent needs is for an efficient bureau of statistics. If we had had such a bureau to turn to this Convention would have been over in half the time. Even if we had had foresight enough at the beginning to call in a competent statistician-economist, I am convinced that we should have achieved more accurate results sooner....

In the absence of conclusive statistical information and special talent skilled in interpretation of the same, I cannot see where any special value