

1. Suitable amendments to our old form of responsible government, a matter which I notice several supporters of responsible government have advocated during recent addresses;
2. Investigation of the practicability of the so-called Con-Dominion suggestion, and of closer fiscal relations with both the USA and Canada; and
3. Investigation in much more detail of the impact of confederation with Canada.

The weak part of Commission government, in my opinion, has been the control of our affairs by a British department (often by subordinates in that department) 2,000 miles away from what should be the real seat of government. I cannot altogether subscribe to the charges that the Commission has been wilfully wasteful; and in that respect they have certainly not been worse than many of the former responsible governments, whose spending was, in most cases, only limited by their revenues, plus the amounts they could borrow. True, their revenues were limited. There is bound to be an end of lavish expenditures, and even amongst our more wealthy neighbours this must come to an end — as witness the present so-called austerity programme now in force on the mainland. It certainly may be necessary in Newfoundland and every other country to reduce public expenditures before very long; and it would seem to me that any party politicians taking charge at the present time and being obliged to cut expenditures, would very quickly become unpopular.

Before leaving this question of Commission government, which has received some hard knocks during our deliberations, I would like to emphasise at least a few good things which I think it has accomplished. Its deficiencies and mistakes do not require setting out by me as they have been amply exposed during our debates, but I think we would not be doing our duty if we did not remind the people of Newfoundland of some of the accomplishments which have benefited the country during the Commission years. These seem to me to be as follows:

1. The refunding of our debt, which was only made possible by the guarantee of the British government and which has saved a very large amount of interest.
2. The payment out of funds taken from taxpayers of Great Britain of sums amounting in

total to over \$16 million as grants-in-aid, free grants from the Colonial Development Fund, and loans from that fund which were eventually converted to free grants.

3. The payment by the British government of the remuneration of the three British Commissioners for a period of 14 years.

4. The setting up and supporting of a sane and most useful marketing system for our fishing industry, which has definitely resulted in a more stable position and which, in my opinion, could not have been attained under responsible government as evidenced by the failure of a similar attempt by a responsible government after the end of the first world war.

5. The formation of co-operative societies, with their most useful study clubs, which have encouraged and are still encouraging careful thought by that most important section of our people, our fishermen.

6. The constitution of many municipalities whose constituents are learning in a practical way the meaning and difficulties of local government, and whose experience and influence must have a marked effect in future years on the responsibilities of the people in connection with responsible governments.

7. The extension of our social services, especially the medical and hospital services all over the country.

Surely, in common decency we owe a large measure of gratitude to the British people for their assistance, from their own funds, of the substantial and generous financial help detailed in the paragraphs which I have just quoted. Let us be fair, Mr. Chairman, in view of the facts and admit that these seven accomplishments listed warrant the thought that perhaps three or four more years of Government by Commission might do us no harm, and I am not at all sure that the wisest words spoken at this Convention were not those spoken by my friend, the member for St. George's, or from the bill of Cape St. George, when he suggested that perhaps we were about five years too soon in starting the deliberations of this Convention. I am personally convinced that the institution of municipalities and co-operatives, as well as recent developments and improvements in connection with our trade unions, are going to be determining factors in helping the future thinking capacity of the Newfoundland