

May 19, 1947

Report of the London Delegation

Mr. Chairman Orders of the day. I have before me the replies of the Dominions Office to the various questions submitted by the delegation of the National Convention, which delegation was appointed pursuant to the resolution of February 28, 1947, and which replies have been brought back by the delegation which went to London some three weeks ago.¹

[The Secretary read the questions and answers, and the Convention resolved into a committee of the whole]

[Mr. Cashin read the resolutions passed by the Convention on 28 February and 10 March, 1947, and a despatch from the Dominions Office dated 18 March, 1947]

Mr. CashinIt will be seen from this memorandum that the Secretary of State agreed to meet the delegation and requested us to forward a more explanatory memorandum of the precise questions which we desired to ask. As a result, the following memorandum was prepared by the elected delegation and forwarded through the proper channel to the Secretary of State.

[Mr. Cashin quoted from the memorandum]

The delegation left St. John's by train on April 24, arriving at Gander the following morning. We left Gander by BOAC on the evening of April 25 and arrived in London around noon on Saturday, April 26.

On the morning of April 29, the delegation was introduced to the Secretary of State and other members of the United Kingdom government. We were tendered a luncheon in the Savoy Hotel by the Secretary of State, and at 3 pm the same day our first meeting took place in the office of the Secretary of State in the House of Lords.² The representatives of the British government who were present were Lord Addison, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs; Mr. W. Glenvil Hall, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and a Member of Parliament; Mr. A.G. Bottomley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Dominion Affairs; and Sir Eric Machtig, Permanent Secretary of State for the Dominions, and various other officials connected with the Dominions

Office and the Treasury. Also there were present the Chairman of the Commission of Government and the Commissioner for Justice, both of whom had preceded us to England for the purpose of sitting in on the meetings, as well as to advise the Secretary of State on matters which were to be discussed by the delegation. As the discussions proceeded, the impression created with some of us was that these two members of the Commission had been summoned to London to give the Dominions Secretary information which he might not have, and for the further purpose of trying to influence the United Kingdom officials on matters of great importance to our country which came up for discussion. It was not uncommon to see considerable whispering take place when questions of serious importance were put to Lord Addison. I personally cannot but think that these two gentlemen, and I refer to the two members of the Commission government, undoubtedly used their influence and efforts to justify the actions of the Commission during the past six or seven years. What I have just said, Mr. Chairman, I believe. I would go so far as to say that the memorandum in reply to our questions, which you have before you, had been prepared before our arrival in England, and that the two members of the Commission government assisted in its preparation.

Mr. Chairman You are making references to a representative of His Majesty the King. I must ask you not to do that in future.

Mr. Cashin I was referring to the Chairman of the Commission of Government.

Mr. Chairman He happens, also, to be the Governor of Newfoundland.

Mr. Cashin I can understand that. Before I give any details of our three meetings, let me say definitely that the object of this delegation to London to discuss matters with the British government was not to seek financial assistance from the mother country. I hold, Mr. Chairman, that Newfoundland today needs no financial help from anyone. Our country is undoubtedly self-supporting. The object of our delegation's going

¹Volume II:448.

²Volume II:451.