

nothing on their backs but an oat sack, with their head up through the bottom and their arms out through the sides. There will be mothers who will be asked to make their decision, who will remember that under responsible government and Commission of Government for some years, there was nothing but the one garment on their backs, and that, sir, was made out of flour sacks. They are not unmindful of the fact, sir, that under the forms of government they have had, they have suffered untold agony and poverty. Some who will be given the privilege to vote will be the sons and daughters of fathers and mothers who have passed out of this life through poverty and want — mothers who had nothing on their backs but a daughter's apron for a singlet and a boat sail for an eiderdown. Men and women today who were boys and girls a few years ago, will remember and can picture their mothers mixing flour with water only, and crusting it on the top of a stove without fat, and sitting down to eat it with nothing but warm water, that to keep body and soul together. One thing we are certain of, sir, and that is that a great majority of the 80,000 sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, who were compelled through no fault of their own to live on \$21.60 per year per person, \$1.80 per month or six cents per day per person, they, sir, are some of the men and women who will decide at the national referendum what form of government they think best suited for their country and ourselves.

Mr. Chairman, I can well remember the time that the members elected under responsible government were given a permit to carry a revolver to protect their lives right here in St. John's. I can still picture the gang on Duckworth Street with a 40-foot pole trying to break into a public building. I can still picture this very building that we are in tonight with the windows broken out, and the only exit for the men to get out of the chamber was to go down those winding stairs in the corner and pass out through the broken window — in some cases, sir, disguised, so that they would not be recognised by the gang outside. The sons and daughters of that generation will still remember the famous parade from the Majestic Theatre to the doors of this chamber.¹ Let us hope, sir, that when they are given the privilege of expressing their views by voting for the form of government they think best, that

they will be given every chance to choose something better than we have had for some years in the past.

As loved our fathers, so we love,
where once they stood, we stand;
Their prayer we raise to heaven above,
God guard thee, Newfoundland.

Mr. Spencer Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak on the motion of Mr. Higgins now before the Chair, let me say at the outset that I intend to support the motion, but it does not necessarily follow that I think either of the forms of government now before the House the best form for this country.

I do not think responsible government, as it existed prior to 1934, would be the best form for this country. First, because I do not see how 320,000 people scattered over 150,000 square miles of territory can be expected to raise revenue enough to give them the public and social services they need and will demand, and still allow them enough to attain the standard of living enjoyed by the peoples of the North American continent. And secondly, if we return to self-government, we shall still have to raise the bulk of our revenue by the system of indirect taxation, which to me is unsound and unfair. Thirdly, with our small population, I fail to see how we can expect to have any large internal industries. Let me explain what I mean. When I worked on the Agriculture Committee of this Convention, we took up with the departmental heads concerned the question of fertilisers. We inquired if it was possible to manufacture fertilisers in this country cheaper than we could import them; we were informed that most of the ingredients would have to be imported, but that the real drawback to their manufacture in this country was the fact that the amount of fertilisers consumed in this country was not large enough to warrant their manufacture on such a scale as would make it profitable. Also the Mining Committee advises us that we have on the west coast all the ingredients that go into the making of cement in close proximity to each other, and the only reason I can see why we do not have a cement manufacturing plant is because the comparatively small amount of cement that would be consumed in the country yearly would not be great enough to allow it to be worked profitably. Neither do I consider the

¹A reference to the parade and riot which took place in April 1932.