ture, is it really a crime against Newfoundland to express an honest doubt? When we venture to disagree with the report's pathetic attempt to convince us that we have been better than self-supporting all those tragic years of destitution, dole, and disease, are we to be denounced as traitors to our country? Has this Convention sunk so low that it is a major crime to remind ourselves of the fact, the indisputable fact, that this country went through a hell of suffering for nearly 20 years between the two wars? Is it not permitted to us to wonder where our country and our people would be today if this war had not broken out? And when we look ahead, is it the one unforgivable sin to doubt that all is well with Newfoundland — to wonder whether there may not be dangerous shoals ahead? I think I know how our Newfoundland people will answer all these questions, with their hard-headed practical minds and their vivid and bitter memories of their privations up to the outbreak of the war in 1939. They are not going to be swept into any easy-going agreement with the optimistic speculations of this Economic Report. They know exactly what value to place upon any report that tells them that their country was self-supporting and better than self-supporting all through those long years of hunger and despair. They know exactly what to call a report that tells them, with cheerful complacency, that our present prosperity, such as it is, is due to anything but the war. And any man who imagines for one moment that our people would be led by the report into its mood of easy optimism is making the mistake of his life.

As I read through the pages of this report, sir, I can allow my imagination to carry me along in company with the report's high hopes and pleasing predictions. I can hear the tread of marching feet, I can see in imagery column after column of presently worthless Newfoundlanders joyously marching towards the paradise of the future, and singing as they go that grand old evangelical chorus, "We are marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion." Would that it were so, sir, but alas I am brought back to the matter-of-fact world by another mental picture. A picture which is founded on reality. It is a picture of Mr. Average Fisherman's home of 40 years ago. I lived among fishermen then as I do now. I know their homes, their work, their flakes and their stages, their boats and their nets, the hardships and the dangers they have endured, what they ate and what they wore, their education, or lack of it, their many labours and their few and limited pleasures, their hopes and their fears, the roughness and monotony of their simple diet, their utter lack of luxury and most of the amenities of life. It was a dull, drab existence; an inadequate reward for their skill, their fearless courage, their iron endurance of heavy labour, chill and drenching spray. In those days the average fisherman who earned a couple of hundred dollars was reasonably fortunate. And yet, sir, he possessed a pride and independence surpassed by few in more favourable circumstances in life. Did the child of a distant relative or connection become orphaned? He willingly assumed the added burden of that child's maintenance, if at all possible. It was something in the nature of a reflection upon him for a relative to be sent to an orphanage. He put all he had into life, and received but a pittance in return. All that was perhaps nobody's fault. The product of his toil was a cheap commodity, consumed for the most part in the least wealthy market.

That sir, is the picture of 40 years ago, a picture I know well from close personal observation. It persisted with uneven variations until the first world war, in the latter days of which, and for a couple of years after its end, that fisherman enjoyed phenomenal prices for the fruit of his toil levelled substantially however, by an increased cost of production and of living. Then came the first postwar slump when he went on the dole in his thousands. Then a short partial recovery during which the bite of poverty was not quite so sharp. Then the crash of the early thirties, when for eight long years he knew the grinding bitterness of dire destitution, and the torture of seeing his children grow thin from malnutrition and crippled with rickets. Beri-beri and tuberculosis stalked through the land. The government, both responsible and Commission, battled with this economic plague as best it could with the limited means at its disposal. But there was little if any improvement in the general conditions. Even as late as 1939, the year of the outbreak of the war, more than 40,000 people were still on dole after some $20,000 of British money had been pumped in in grants-in-aid to help keep the country afloat.

And then sir, then, at the end of that terrible period, we experienced one of the bitterest