

point I am trying to make is that we compared two things that were not comparable....

[There followed a lengthy discussion of the spe-

cial freight rates charged to certain companies. The committee rose and reported progress and the Convention adjourned]

January 9, 1947

Mr. Chairman Orders of the day. Mr. Smallwood to move that the Commissioner for Public Utilities be invited to appear before the Convention, in public or private session as he shall prefer, to present an account of the facts of the financing of Gander, and to be interrogated thereon.

Mr. Smallwood Mr. Chairman, I feel that the motion is self-explanatory and it does not need any verbal defence whatever. I think we all are agreed that we are not satisfied that we have the complete story of Gander. We do not know who is responsible for the debt to be incurred, and for that reason I move the motion.

Mr. Fowler I feel very much in favour of Mr. Smallwood's motion and take pleasure in seconding it.

Mr. Job Mr. Chairman, I support the resolution proposed by Mr. Smallwood, and take the opportunity to make a few remarks on the subject which I think is allied to the resolution. My view for some time has been that we shall not make serious progress in helping to remedy certain existing defects in the economic position of Newfoundland until we, as Newfoundlanders, are able to sit down at a round table conference with appointed representatives of Great Britain, Canada and the United States of America, to discuss not only the question of operation of airports, and the concessions already given and asked for in connection with defence bases, but also our general economic position. As you are probably aware by this time, I am of the opinion that we should on every possible occasion stress the fact that our valuable strategic position is being utilised by Canada, the USA and Great Britain for defence and other purposes, without any material return to Newfoundland for its use, and without any consultation with the people of Newfoundland.

At a round table conference, at which *real* representatives of Newfoundland should be present, these questions could be thrashed out and the case for Newfoundland could be properly presented. Our position is such a strong one, that if properly impressed it could not fail to appeal

to our American and Canadian friends, who are anxious to continue to utilise to the utmost for their own important purposes, the valuable facilities arising from our strategic position.

The ace card we hold for negotiations in connection with the future prosperity of Newfoundland consists of her strategic position. Our problem is in my opinion an economic one, and not as some people seem to imagine, mainly a political one. The sooner an attempt is made to secure such a joint conference the better, and its object should be to discuss the degree of assistance, by tariff concessions or otherwise, to which Newfoundland is entitled, in exchange for utilisation of her strategic position for the benefit mainly of Canada, USA and Great Britain. I make no apology for repeatedly stressing this viewpoint, and on some suitable occasion hope to place before the Convention some definite plan of action to secure such a conference as that proposed.

Mr. Ashbourne I am in favour of this motion and I support it, but it has occurred to me that there may be other matters which the members might want to take up with the Commissioner for Public Utilities. According to the motion as worded this interview would relate to Gander airport and would, unless amended, debar the consideration of other matters; possibly Mr. Smallwood could enlarge the motion to include any other matters of public concern any member might wish to bring before him at this time.

Mr. Smallwood I am prepared to accede to Mr. Ashbourne's suggestion. The only thing is we ought to be specific. We ask the Commissioner to come and give a certain explanation about one particular thing; we cannot add "such other matters as we would wish to discuss." We would have to be specific so that he could bring along other data on the matters to be discussed. If the house wants to add any other topic to be discussed with the Commissioner, I am agreeable to that.

Mr. Chairman If Mr. Ashbourne wishes to make an amendment, that would be in order, but as Mr. Smallwood has pointed out, we cannot obviously invite the Commissioner here and