

that Newfoundland's entry into such a union would be immeasurably more advantageous as a sovereign nation than as a province of Canada. That rapidly approaching possibility is alone almost enough to convince us of the wisdom of not taking such an irrevocable step as confederation.

But enough of that digression. Now on this matter of Canadian terms. I have asked, "What terms?" The foolish argument is advanced that some of us are afraid to get the terms because they will be so good that only a fool would refuse to accept them. So say the confederates — it is just as well to give them their names, to call a spade a spade. An equally foolish argument is advanced by some anticonfederates, namely, "If we don't get the terms, even the anticonfederates will begin to get suspicious and wonder about this vision of utopia that the Convention is trying to veil from the eyes of the people." Again I ask, "What terms?" The British North America Act lays down the conditions under which Newfoundland may expect to be admitted into the Canadian confederation. It is alleged Newfoundland will get special considerations through this Convention, which same Convention has not even the power much less the right to negotiate. Mr. Smallwood himself in a letter in *The Daily News* some weeks ago, in reply to a letter of Mr. Bailey's, admitted that we already knew 95% of the terms, it was the other 5% we had to find out about. Even admitting that narrow margin between our present position and our position in confederation, it is plain from the committee's report of the interview with Commission of Government that the 5%, the special concessions, cannot even be discussed by a delegation; I refer you to page 2 of said report,¹ which says that "Your Committee was advised that the words 'or what other fiscal, political or economic arrangements may be possible,' appearing in clause 3 of the resolution, should not be included in any enquiry or in the terms of reference of any delegation to the Dominion of Canada as these are matters entirely for discussion between governments." In other words, we are told indirectly that to properly negotiate satisfactory terms for entry into confederation we must do so through a proper government, and that, as far as I am concerned, is responsible government. The only ground upon which I would be satisfied for this

Convention to get any terms from Canada would be this: if I were assured that such terms would be merely for the information of this Convention and the people; that they would be used only as a basis for negotiation in the event that at the referendum the people expressed a preference for responsible government, and that the Convention, having obtained such terms, would not be levered into putting confederation on these terms in the referendum. But there is no such assurance.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I will say that I see underlying this indecision about the merits of confederation as a form of government, the fear of some members in this assembly that in the event of confederation not being on a referendum the country will approve the status quo and these members will never get into politics. I do not share this fear. I think the majority of our people will repudiate Commission government when the time comes. If I am wrong, and they do not, then as much as it is against my grain, I will abide by their decision. Others will claim that if we get back responsible government we will never again hear tell of confederation. That is absurd. Any man or group of men can form a confederate party and go to the country. If that democratic fact and right is not convincing enough proof of the absurdity of the above claim, then I believe it is within the right of this Convention to put responsible government on the referendum, with a mandate which will ensure the people that should they accept responsible government, that government will undertake to explore all other feasible constitutional forms of responsible government, besides dominion status, to enable the people to determine whether or not they would be better served by entry into one or other of the unions I have mentioned.

On these several counts I agree whole-heartedly with the very able and statesmanlike speech made by Mr. Hollett yesterday which lucidly and thoroughly summed up the present situation and showed the international web with which we are entangled. His appraisal of the facts and his unimpassioned though pungent delivery of his convictions will stand out in the records of this Convention as one of the finest pronouncements ever uttered here.

The resolution to send a delegation to London to thrash out matters of extreme importance to

¹Volume II:446.