

(as also in China, I believe), and in many cases it is recurrent. It is a product of a wretched economic environment. We patch up the wrecked body as best we may and send it back to that environment. Is our work particularly constructive, would you say? Wouldn't it be more constructive to go after that economic environment and change it too? Meanwhile, whilst we are treating the patient there is one less producer at work; and the economy of the country suffers thereby — two ways.

Our government is spending considerable money on public health. It needs to spend much more. But where are we going to get it? We need more hospitals, more nursing services, more doctors in public health work. How are they going to be paid for in normal times? I don't know. But before I start shouting for any particular form or forms of government, I want to know. If the Convention can find an answer to questions like that, it will have achieved something of permanent value.

It is an open question how far any government can be held accountable for economic prosperity. Personally, I think the matter goes deeper than a question of constitutions. It goes to the very roots of such organised society as we have. But you cannot have political democracy, as far as I am concerned, without individual economic freedom. Meanwhile, we are here to discuss among ourselves what changes have taken place in the financial and economic situation since 1934. Let us drop the oratory and get on with it. **Mr. Keough** Mr. Chairman, we are gathered here at a most solemn moment for Newfoundland. It is a moment every bit as solemn as the first moment of discovery. It is a moment every bit as solemn as that when Newfoundlanders first congregated in responsible government. For this is the time of decision as to whether this land we live in can support a community of civilised men in such fashion as civilised men expect to be supported in this mid-20th century. We must make as accurate an estimate as may be possible of our capacity to be sufficient unto ourselves, and having done so, say whether or not we think we can fuse the economics that we must live by, and such genius for the political as may be ours, into a satisfactory social and political order. It is of utmost importance that we should not err in our estimate of what the national economy will

support. For if we err in that, then shall we defeat our whole purpose. It was that thought which has led me to wonder if the holding of this Convention at this time is not a bit premature. I am not at all so certain that this is such a happy moment to have to decide what we must now decide. In some future year the world would have had time to stop vibrating and the post-war pattern of life would have become distinct. We could then better judge to what extent we could be sufficient unto ourselves. Five years from now would be a much better time to determine whether we will still be able to balance our national budget, and what is still more important, whether that last forgotten fisherman out on the bill of Cape St. George, or down on the bill of Cape Norman will still be able to balance his budget five years from now. That for me is the ultimate test. The Commissioner for Finance or the Minister for Finance, whichever it might be, might well go on balancing the national budget from now till doomsday but the same would be no real indication of a satisfactory national economy if there were still those who did not eat. For me what matters is not so much budget surpluses, as that none should have to tighten his belt.

However, that which we must decide must be decided not later than in the days of the forthcoming national referendum. It is going to be most unfortunate for Newfoundland if too many people get delusions of grandeur about what we are ready for in governments, and insist upon our biting off more than we can chew. A year or so ago I would have said that there was great danger of that very thing happening, for quite a number of people seemed to think that we were ready for almost anything in government. In the meantime many have retreated from that position and are now quite content, indeed are now quite insistent, that this Convention should give precedence of consideration to the economic over the constitutional. This is, of course, as it should be. Once this Convention can come to see somewhat clearly the probable shape of economic things to come, once we can determine wherein there has been permanent change in the economic and financial structure of this island, then will our task be greatly simplified. However, how to see through the still effective economic distortions of war to permanent change without the benefit of a certain minimum of relevant statistics will not