

must have a greater portion than has been his historic portion. We have been witness in our time to a great movement of the minds of men that's already come to have some effect upon the economics we live by and that cannot but have further considerable effect upon the shape of things economic in this land. But before I go on to relate these proposed arrangements for the entry of Newfoundland into confederation to all that, let me say this.

During all the days of this Convention, Mr. Newell and myself have gone out of our way at times to emphasise and italicise and reiterate the economics. We have hammered away at the theme of three square meals a day, and a decent suit of clothes on the back, and a tight roof over the head, every time that we have had our mouths open. Maybe we've overdone it. But I doubt that in this land such a theme can be overdone. I know that more often than not we have not said the proper things. But then, the thoughts that one has had holed up for the night in a tilt on the trail to Flower's Cove, or wallowing around the bill of Cape St. George in a lobster smack, have not been particularly proper thoughts either. And the mere shift of scene to the National Convention has not been anything like enough to stifle that. We have had a long association, Mr. Newell and I, with the men of this island whose overalls reek with the salt of the fish flakes, the manure of the barnyard, and the resin of the pulpwoods, and it has not been particularly conducive to the mouthing of platitudes. If at times we have sounded somewhat bitter, I hope that we haven't, but if we have, then that has been because we have sometimes seen such sights as a whole family curled up for a winter's night in a circle around the fire, or on the floor of a tar-paper shack; or a mother cooking for her children a dinner of pancakes of sour-dough on top of a sawed-off oil drum that served as a stove, or because, to quote Mr. Newell, "I saw death and hunger on a barren coastline/The empty cupboard and the lean winter — /But deeper than all the beaten look of despair/Was the dumb and impotent fury/In a man's eyes as he turned/To the thing that had to be done."¹ So if we said things that have rankled, don't think that they were dreamed up in an easy chair before a comfortable fire, because they weren't; and don't

think we're sorry if by any chance we've disturbed somebody's peace of mind, because we're not. We may have had some hard things to say, but if we have, then it's been because we've felt that at this moment of historic decision, a few hard sayings wouldn't go amiss.

Now, the great movement of the minds of men to which I refer has been a movement of the minds of men to the left; and this movement has had repercussions in the economies of most countries, including our own. All the days of all our lives, this movement of the mass of men to the left has been going on. Sometimes it has been a dribble, sometimes a torrent. With some it has been a matter of honest, intellectual conviction that that is the way that they should go; with most, it has been merely a matter of hoping to be cut in for a larger slice of the cake to be divided among the numbers of the nation. Indeed, irrespective of what may have driven the pundits to the left, it has been the hope of more bread and more lavish circuses that has enticed the people. Inevitably there has been class conflict over the division of the cake. In some countries this has led to bitter class warfare resulting in the elimination of the older aristocracies and the setting up of a new aristocracy ruling in the name of the proletariat. Just how much of the cake the proletariat has come to be cut in for in consequence of all this, however, seems rather problematic. Every now and then there are disquieting rumours out of Russia, for instance. Other peoples have settled for less than the dictatorship of the proletariat and are content, for the moment at any rate, with social security legislation calculated to improve the economic condition of low income groups. Scarcely a country but has in our own time made provision for a wider distribution of the cake. That is why you have workmen's compensation, minimum wage legislation, unemployment insurance, widows' pensions, family allowances and all the rest of it. These are things that everyone has come to take for granted in the countries where they have them, or to look for in the countries where they haven't. So I say that the whole consciousness of mankind has moved a little left of centre. Even your arch-conservative today is more social-minded than was his grandfather. At any rate, if he be eligible for old

¹Isaac Newell's poem, "Lines for an Anniversary (1497-1947)" won the O'Leary Newfoundland Poetry Award in 1947.