

work of the civil service, but it will have the effect of placing in a secondary position other very important questions.... We have no official notification that any requests for information were rejected.

Mr. MacDonald In the event of the Information Committee's turning down a question which to them is irrelevant, is the committee involved informed?

Mr. Chairman The plan adopted by the Information Committee is that where any doubt arises as to the relevancy of the request for information, the questioner is invited to come and discuss the matter with the committee. Again we found that for certain questions asked, the answers could be gathered from certain reports which we then placed in the hands of the questioner. Other questions are very difficult from the viewpoint of finding the source of information. Some have to be answered not by government departments but by members of the trade.

Mr. Bradley If the particular committee concerned has been refused answers relative to leases, it is a matter which should be reported immediately to the Information Committee and if we cannot get satisfaction, then we should report it to this house and let the house deal with it.

Mr. Chairman The Information Committee is meeting every day so that every opportunity can be availed of to obtain factual material essential to the Convention; but we must have reference to the terms of reference with regard to the relevancy of the question. We have to remember we are not a parliament. We cannot go into matters in the same way as a parliamentary government could be investigated by an opposition. We are a consultative body considering amongst ourselves the financial and economic condition of the country, and the information which the Convention seeks, of necessity, has to be information relevant to the work of the Convention.

Mr. Smallwood There may be a suggestion of faith and confidence in the executive and not for us to worry, but the fact remains there is a possibility the very future of this country is being determined today by the government, by the alienation of some of the resources out of which the country has to get its revenue. True we are not an opposition; we are not in opposition to the government. I do not know what we can do to

convey the idea that even while we are meeting, perhaps some of the public domain in Labrador is being bartered away, making it thereby impossible for this country to be self-supporting in the future. Members of this house have been complaining and grumbling — I am doing the unpopular thing of voicing it. I have had it said to me in the dining room of the Newfoundland Hotel, "Sitting around you are five concessionaires seeking concessions in Labrador over and above those already given." Perhaps we can only talk about it, but we ought to let the country, the government and the press and radio know that we have lost the public domain of Newfoundland itself; tied it up irrevocably as long as concessionaires care, bartered away by this and former governments. What is left is being sought by hungry concessionaires — hungry like flies around a molasses puncheon — seeking the last vestige of territory.

Mr. Chairman We have no power or authority to make recommendations in regard to matters of policy. Our sole duty is within the four corners of section 3 of the National Convention Act....¹ That is the full scope of our authority. In reply to Mr. Smallwood, I have to advise you that we cannot interfere with matters of government policy.

Mr. Dawe What is the use in bringing in the report if we do not know what is happening?

Mr. Bradley If part of our duty is to examine the position of the country, it seems to follow that we have the right to know what assets this country has, and it follows upon that we have a right to know what is being done with the assets. I do not know what the Commission is doing. I know what they have done and I shall have something to say about it before this Convention closes. But I do not know what they are doing now. I want to know what assets are left, and whether any attempt is being made to dispose of them by what may be a dying government. The chairman of that particular committee should report to the Information Committee and if that committee cannot get satisfaction, it will be reported to the Convention.

Mr. Chairman That is the procedure to be followed....

Mr. Cashin As acting chairman of the Forestry Committee, I wish to report that we have been

¹Volume II:1.