

reports they have seen were those issued at the instance of the Dominions Office: the Amulree Report,¹ the Goodwill Mission report,² the Gorvin report³ and the one which we are now asked to receive. It is both significant and deplorable that no official report has been issued from any Newfoundland source and that no Newfoundland mentality has had any part in the preparation of those submitted to us. Is it any wonder that the only side of the case which Newfoundlanders have had placed before them is the case for Commission of Government? Is it not high time that we Newfoundlanders did something about this, and prepared our own report — a Newfoundland report for the benefit of our people? Surely we are just as competent to discuss and analyse the affairs of our own country as some Englishmen thousands of miles away? Must we continue to meekly accept these biased and self-motivated publications of outsiders?

In my estimation the famous Amulree Report is a publication whose sole and single aim was to pave the way and justify in advance an inexcusable act of political sabotage which had already been decided on. The Goodwill report and the Gorvin report were simply the usual valueless impressions of fly-by-night transients, whose authors wrote their reports under the admonishing finger of their masters in Downing Street. The latest of these reports, that of June past, I have before me. It was obviously written for the enlightenment and guidance of the delegates of this Convention, no doubt with the object of influencing their thoughts and decisions. As usual, the authors are graduates of the Dominions Office in London, their names being Messrs. Chadwick and Jones and as usual the report bears the imprimatur of that office.

There is one characteristic all these reports seem to have in common, and that is the complete absence of any criticism of the actions of the British government, the Dominions Office or Commission government. Calumnies there are in galore of Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders — our ignorance, our backwardness, our political corruption. Libels are plentifully interspersed

throughout their pages on our religious institutions, our living and our dead. But never one single criticism or one word of censure against those people or bodies at whose instigation they were making these reports. This is perhaps only to be expected and may be regarded as good politics, but it is certainly not honest politics.

For the purpose of further illustrating what I have said about these reports in general, I propose to quote a few extracts from this latest piece of Commission propaganda. The opening lines read as follows: "In 1933 financial difficulties combined with the economic effects of a world-wide depression led the Newfoundland Government to approach the United Kingdom for assistance." These are just the first four lines of this report, but let us see how true a picture they represent. I call your attention to the words, "financial difficulties compelled us to ask for assistance." It fails to explain that the real assistance we asked for was bluntly refused. That a gun was put to our heads, the demand that we first commit political suicide before any assistance would be forthcoming. The report also conveniently fails to state the simple facts: that we would never have been in financial difficulties at all, but for the extraordinary sacrifices made by our, what they term backward people and corrupt politicians, when they voluntarily sacrificed our national credit to the tune of \$40 million as our contribution towards the winning of World War I. It would therefore follow that, in 1933, our normal debt would have only been \$60 million and this after 78 years of strenuous national existence. Would this indicate our inefficiency in handling our affairs? Does this show incapacity on the part of our public men as the Amulree Report recklessly states? This report does not even hint that, in 1933, the obvious and proper course for Newfoundland to follow under the circumstances was some form of default. In support of this I quote briefly from an authoritative statement made by A.F.W. Plumptre, of the University of Toronto, and published in the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*.⁴ Mr. Plumptre states that on June 15, 1933, the British government actually paid \$10

¹Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933 Report (Cmd. 4480, 1933).

²The so-called "goodwill mission" visited Newfoundland in 1943.

³J.H. Gorvin, *Report on Land Settlements in Newfoundland* (St. John's, 1938); and *Papers Relating to a Long Range Reconstruction Policy in Newfoundland* (St. John's, 1938).

⁴A.F.W. Plumptre "Newfoundland, Economic and Political. I. The Amulree Report (1933): A Review," in *The Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science*, Vol III No. 1 (1937), pp. 58-71.