

to deal with political matters, but obviously and clearly and beyond all doubt, it was outside our jurisdiction to deal with them as partisans. It was not our business to advocate or oppose any form of government. Our duty, the whole purpose of our existence was simple and plain. It was to recommend to the British government forms of government to be submitted to the people at a referendum. Nothing more and nothing less. Obviously that task was to select and recommend such forms of government as might be suitable to the people of the country. It was the British government's inability to carry out this task that brought this Convention into existence. We were to do what they, 2,000 miles away, could not do.

Because of our closer associations with, and presumably greater knowledge of our own people — and remember care was taken to see that all sections of the country were represented — because of these associations, we should be able to judge more clearly not what the people actually wanted — that was for them to say — but what they *might* want, what might be suitable to them. Our own personal predilections and prejudices, our own party loyalties and antagonisms, our own political beliefs and faiths were all entirely outside the scope of that purpose and should never have been permitted to enter in. Indeed, if we had adhered strictly to our plain duty, we would have completed our task, made our recommendations, and up to the dissolution of the Convention not one Newfoundlander need have known what particular form of government was favoured by any individual member of the Convention. We are not here to express our political views or to advocate any form of government, but simply to study calmly, not as party hacks, what in our opinion might be suitable to the people of Newfoundland, and to recommend to the Government of the United Kingdom that the people of Newfoundland be given an opportunity to say which form might be suitable to them. They, the people, would choose.

Unfortunately it became plain from the outset that the Convention was to be the scene of a struggle of ideologies instead of one concerned for the wishes of the people, a political battleground instead of a forum of calm investigation. Indeed, at one stage of the proceedings there were plain indications that would shut out all but one form of government, do away with the

referendum altogether; and it is fortunate indeed that the British government was far-sighted enough to retain the last word in their own hands.

Now I come to this resolution. The cloven hoof of partisanship is apparent in its very wording. It does not recommend that Commission government and responsible government or either of them be submitted to the people — I repeat, it does not recommend that either Commission or responsible government be submitted to the people. What it does do is to set these two forms in a class by themselves, and it asks the people to declare their preference as between the two. If it passes, and I am quite sure it will, because it has the support of the responsible government group which constitutes two-thirds of this Convention, if it passes it is plain that any other form of government is excluded. I want to repeat that, sir. If this resolution passes in its present form it is plain that any other form of government is excluded. If I vote for this resolution I cannot consistently vote for a resolution to place any other form of government upon the ballot paper, for I have already chosen to demand that the people shall make a choice between these two, and I can't now consistently add a third. I have asked that there be a showdown between these two forms of government, and a third and a fourth form of government has no place in that showdown.

Assuming that the resolution itself has passed, and that Mr. Smallwood's resolution to place the question of confederation upon the ballot paper also passes, and that some other member of this Convention proposes a resolution that representative government be also placed upon the ballot paper and that passes, now what position are we in? Isn't it an absurdity? The first thing that we recommend is that we have a showdown between responsible government and Commission government, and the winner of that duel is then to take up the cudgels with the other two. Obviously the position is an absurd one, and no man who votes for this resolution can, in consistency, vote to place any other form of government on the ballot paper.

Again, I would point out that our duty is to recommend forms of government to be submitted to the people. Nowhere in the Convention Act do I find anything authorising us to make recommendations to keep any form of government off