

Convention. That is something that I must continue for the rest of my days to regard with great gratitude....

As the impartial Chairman of this Convention, I am not a member; I came here under a royal commission, and have been working with you gentlemen for going on four months. We have had our troubles, and perhaps made our mistakes and had our shortcomings, nor did we ever make a pretence to being an assembly of wise men. No properly elected assembly ever is or ever has been in the history of the world, but I want to say this: we have been criticised outside, and quite properly so. Any man who offers himself for public office must be prepared to accept criticism, but I do feel that the criticism directed at times towards the work of this Convention has not been fair. For if I have any powers of perception, and if I am capable of evaluating man and his handiwork, then I want to lay down that in my judgement the work of this Convention must inevitably prove to be of an inestimable value to the country, not only now but in the future. It is a very easy thing to tell a man to do something, an entirely different thing to go and do it yourself. And I am not satisfied that the criticism at times directed towards this Convention was fair, for the reason that many of these critics did not take the time to qualify themselves by experience to assume the status of critics.

I would say ... that the work done by the committees particularly, and the Convention generally, was of a tremendous nature, to say the least. How could any man in his right mind, and with a proper sense of proportion, view all the reports which have been compiled by the committees, the co-ordination of these reports, and eventually the recommendations which we are now about to make, and say that nothing has been accomplished?.... If this Convention did nothing other than to provoke this country out of the Rip Van Winkle sleep into which it had sunk for 14 years, and had produced and created, as it has, political consciousness in the minds of our people, then I am prepared to reaffirm that from this standpoint alone, the members of this Convention have quite definitely justified their usefulness.

Eighteen months ago the majority of the people that I met had no idea what form of government they intended to support. They were

not interested in talking about forms of government. Today you have in this country three schools of thought. That is to say, three forms of government are being discussed, their merits and demerits, by all sections of the people. And I would say this, that if Major Cashin has provoked people into a realisation of the merits of responsible government, and others into deciding against responsible government, then Major Cashin and his associates in this House have performed a most invaluable function, because they have made up the minds of these people as to what they desire in future forms of government. The same goes for Mr. Smallwood. If the country ever gets the chance to decide for or against confederation, I think all fair-minded men must agree that the prodigious and untiring efforts of Mr. Smallwood have made that possible. I could go on with further and repeated illustrations, but I do not want to unnecessarily trespass upon the time and patience of members, but I do feel duty bound to state at this time, as I propose to state publicly outside this Convention, that in my considered judgement I think this country is irreparably indebted to this Convention, and the members. At times it was trying; but the fact that it was trying is proof paramount of the sincerity with which the members of this Convention discharged their duties. Had they been lackadaisical and indifferent about the welfare of the country, then there would have been no sharp exchanges because nobody would be sufficiently excited about the business to get angry over it....

Therefore, before taking leave of you, I feel duty bound to repeat what I have already repeated — that is that in my considered judgement, and I would say there is no man better in a position in this country today to evaluate your work than I am, because I was here scrutinizing it night and day for some four months — I make this statement again and I defy any successful contradiction from any source whatsoever, that this country is irrevocably indebted to the Convention and to all the members of the Convention. Therefore having been permitted to associate myself with the highly successful discharge of your duties, it must inevitably prove to be a source of great satisfaction to me in the days that are to come.

In expressing again my deep appreciation and