

fidential" and "Secret", we held them as such, and during our stay in Ottawa I was under secrecy as far as these documents were concerned; but I cannot recollect that the Canadian government asked me to keep anything that I brought back from Ottawa from this National Convention.

Mr. Chairman In your judgement, Mr. Burry, would there be anything unusual or immoral in my directing a request to any members of the delegation who feel that they are not in conscience bound to keep from the Convention any of the information they received?

Mr. Burry As far as I am concerned, I have a folder in my bag with the information in it, and I have no scruples in letting any member see what is in it.

Mr. Chairman Supposing I were to ask you, would you please have mimeographed this document which is in your bag — would you consider that an improper or unconscionable ruling?

Mr. Burry No, because I was not asked to do such.

Mr. Ashbourne I would advise you to ask Mr. Bradley about that; I asked Mr. Bradley myself, and his answer was that it was secret and confidential.

Mr. Chairman With all due respect to Mr. Bradley, this is a matter of conscience.... But the opinion has been expressed by Mr. Higgins, Rev. Burry and Mr. Smallwood that they can see no reason why this information would be withheld from the Convention. Therefore I am now requesting these three gentlemen, if according to their own consciences they are free to do so, would they please be good enough to pass over any document or documents they may have to the Secretary to be mimeographed and distributed to the members. That does not obligate you, Mr. Ashbourne, or Mr. Bradley, or anyone else who thinks he is in conscience bound to withhold it from the Convention. At the same time it allows other members to exercise, or at least to govern their actions by the dictates of their conscience.

Mr. Crummey Does that include minutes of plenary sessions?

Mr. Chairman That includes, as far as I am concerned, everything that came into the possession of the delegation. You were sent down there by the Convention and as far as I am concerned, unless it is a matter of morals or scruples or conscience or something of that sort, I can see no

reason in the world why your report back to this Convention should not be completed by passing over any ancillary or supplementary documents you may have in your possession.... My ruling is that Rev. Burry, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Smallwood, who apparently feel they are not in conscience bound to withhold the information, and are willing to make available the information, should pass over to the Secretary to be mimeographed and distributed, any documents in their possession, to be made available to members of the Convention.

Mr. Ballam All these dark secrets which we are talking about are merely reports of committees, talks across the table, minutes. The minutes we were asked to keep confidential. You understand in committees of that kind how embarrassing it would be for these things to get in the press, just at committee stage. We were at the committee stage — these Black Books are the ultimate findings of all committees. Anything not included in the Black Books, I take it, the Canadian government did not want to include. If I understand it correctly, anything we had in our minor reports or minutes, we were actually asked to destroy before we left, except the official report of the delegation; and as Mr. Smallwood has said, the Black Books do contain in the main, I would say, the greater percentage of all the discussions and all talks. There are no secrets as far as I am concerned, but we all agreed that the across the table discussions would be kept to ourselves.

Mr. Chairman If the discussions between the Newfoundland delegation and the Canadian government are literally or substantially contained in the Black Books, does not that of itself put beyond question any suggestion that the Canadian government ever intended them to remain secret? If they were to be secret and withheld from members of the Convention, why would they be incorporated in books which were sent for distribution to members of this Convention?

Mr. Butt If we want any of these documents we ought to ask the appropriate department of government, presumably the Department of External Affairs, whether they can or cannot be released....

Mr. Chairman That was my original suggestion, but Mr. Smallwood thought it was a waste of time, in the sense we have to wait to receive