

have been in this country since 1941, and are today, active agents whose business and object is to usher Newfoundland into confederation with Canada, and to induce our people to walk into the trap which has been baited. The outward evidence of the activities of these pro-confederate agents is shown in the foisting of this Convention upon us, so that the agreement made with the Newfoundland government in 1933 could be evaded. It is shown in the act of exporting from this country a great portion of the people's treasury; in the reckless and deliberate squandering of our revenues to the tune of \$40 million a year; in the giving away of reckless concessions, and under disgraceful conditions, of our Labrador territory. It is evidenced by the false pictures of the fictitious prosperity which would be ours if we have confederation. It is shown by the actions of members of the Ottawa delegation, who in collaboration with the Canadian government, cooked up and brought back to us false estimates and misleading statements; by the existence of secret documents given to that delegation and the failure to produce them before this Convention; by the circumstances under which the Canadian delegation was elected. All these things indicate to me at least beyond all doubt, that Newfoundland today is being conspired against from all sides. And if there was any doubt on this score, it must be dismissed when we see that the business of negotiating us into confederation has been entrusted to a body such as this, which has no power to negotiate, no power to speak for the people, which in the last analysis has neither the knowledge, the experience, nor the qualifications to pass on this matter, a matter which any sensible person knows is one for a properly constituted and elected government. This whole business is not alone illegal, it is worse, it is immoral.

I would ask you to believe me when I say that I have not said these things merely to make a case for responsible government, or because I am against confederation with Canada. I have made my criticisms against these terms as a Newfoundlander rather than a politician — as a Newfoundlander who sees in them a threat to his people and his country, who sees hidden in their beguiling phrases nothing less than an invitation to national disaster. For I say that I was never as certain of anything in my life, as I am of the

worthlessness of these so-called Canadian terms.

Now I realise that some people may not agree with me. They may see, or think they see, bright prospects for us under confederation with Canada. I cannot find it in my mind to judge them too harshly. For out of the political muddle which has been purposely created in this country, how can we expect the average man or woman to know what it is all about, when we, who have been close to the picture for over 16 months, are still looking for information? It is because I am aware of this bewilderment on the part of our people, that I feel it my duty to take upon myself the obligation of advising them to the best of my ability as to the road I think we should pursue.

To those who, like myself, recognise the fact that the only proper and decent course open to us is to become masters in our own house, no further words of mine are necessary. But to those who may be beguiled to any degree by this confederation mirage, I say do nothing further — make no new steps. Do not consider any negotiations until, as a first step, you have a duly authorised government of your own to consider the whole matter. Any other course is sheer political madness. That is my solemn advice to you. Whether you take it or not rests with yourselves. And if we delegates have failed to carry that one message to the people who sent us here, then I say we have failed dismally in our duty.

In closing I would ask your permission to express a purely personal opinion. I am convinced that although our country and our people are at present enshrouded in a pall of political darkness, they will eventually find their way into the light. This whole matter of bribes and promises will in the end be shown up for what it really is. And I say this not because our people would shrink from the new burden of taxation which confederation with Canada will place on their shoulders, not because of the vision of the thousands of homesteads which may have to be sold to satisfy the Canadian tax gatherers. No. It will not be for these things alone, that our people will spurn this offer for them to sell out the land of their birth. I say our people will win through because of other, greater things. They will triumph, emerge from this ordeal, because there are still in this country such things as pride, courage and faith. Pride in the great traditions which have come down to us through the centuries of inde-