

the Government of Canada can offer. No Canadian government could possibly offer Newfoundland better terms, not even if an elected government fought for it. It may be smart tactics to say ... "Yes, the terms appear to be fair, but an elected government would get better terms." That may be smart tactics, it may even be smart politics, but it has this serious point against it. It just is not true.

I would like to repeat again what I did say on that occasion to which Mr. Smallwood made answer. I quoted from the reply from the Canadian government to our request for these discussions. "The Canadian government is of the opinion that the questions to be discussed with the delegation are of such complexity and of such significance for both countries that it is essential to have a complete and comprehensive exchange of information and a full and careful exploration by both parties of all the issues involved, so that an accurate appreciation of the position may be gained on each side." I drew your attention to the wording of this reply and, in particular, "the questions to be discussed with the delegation are of such complexity" and again, "so that an accurate appreciation of the position may be gained on each side." I then stated:

As you are aware, our delegation had no expert assistance of any kind. Application was made to the Commission of Government for such assistance, but the application was refused. On the Canadian side, the cabinet members designated to take part in the discussions were flanked by some of the top men of the civil service of Canada. Moreover, the problem of confederation had been under active study by this particular group since October of last year. Actually, Canadian government officials have been studying the proposition for some years.

As you are aware, our delegation had no such opportunity of preparation and certainly no such assistance during the discussions. In my opinion, our delegation was not competent to discuss fully such an important matter without proper assistance and without an adequate study of the problem. I say to you quite sincerely, that for any person, member of this Convention or not, to advise the people of this country to join in federal union with Canada without the necessary study of

all the implications of such union, is nothing less than criminal.

What you say, is the proper approach? In my opinion before union should be recommended, a complete study of the Canadian system should be made by the various departmental heads of our civil service, to see and advise the effect such Union would have. The heads of these departments would then confer with a delegation having full powers to negotiate. In other words, the case for Newfoundland would be carefully prepared and fully understood by those who are to present it, and moreover, the delegation representing Newfoundland should have with them these same departmental heads to advise and assist throughout the negotiations.

I trust that my fellow members of the delegation will not take it that I am making any reflection on them when I say that the delegation was not competent to discuss the matters we were discussing. This is not intended to be a reflection on the ability of any one of them, but simply (except possibly in the case of Mr. Smallwood), that none of us had studied the matter thoroughly before the appointment of the delegation, and we were at a tremendous disadvantage with no technical advice, and lastly, but most important of all, we had no power to negotiate.

I must frankly confess that the offer we have received appears to be fair, but I am fully confident that a delegation properly informed, assisted by competent advisers, and with the power to negotiate would receive a better offer from Canada than we have received. I say that with full knowledge of what I am saying. From information I gathered from various sources during our visit to Ottawa, I am certain that the Canadian government would have given us a better offer than we have gotten had the case been properly presented. Again I repeat with full knowledge of what I am saying, that we can still get a better offer or, if you will, more favourable terms of confederation, if the approach is made by a government elected by and representative of Newfoundland.

I mean no reflection on the members of the delegation but I say again, that we were not competent to bargain for terms of confederation