

100 years and had never been aware of the changes that had taken place in human endeavour, could foist that form of government on his long-suffering human brother, because we and the English, if you undress us and we don't speak, you can hardly tell us apart. I have asked myself the question, why did our people stand for it? For you can't give away freedom and have it. There is only one answer to my mind. There were too many of our bonds held in Newfoundland. I haven't the least doubt that the constitution would not have gone only it was a choice between the 5% and 6% interest on the bonds and the constitution. So the constitution lost.

In this I am reminded of a bond poster in England during the first world war. It said, "You gave your sons, but you won't lend your money." In this case it was "You'll make sure of your percentage" — the mess of pottage. And then through promises, half truths, a heaven on earth was promised by a nation who, for a scrap of paper in 1914, went to war. That was our battle cry, '33, how nice the promises, how soft the siren's song. I have the Amulree Report; how much it says, how little it means — something like my Lord Addison, one question answered seven different ways, then coming back, the other scrap of paper treated by our sainted mother just as callously as Germany treated that scrap of paper guaranteeing the independence of Belgium — so has Britain treated us, less the loss of life and property. Let us examine the report. It starts with a history time forbids us to go into, so we'll take things that count for our period.

I'll first quote paragraph 218: "The credit system might have disappeared without direct intervention by the government, had an attempt been made to train the people to independence."<sup>1</sup> Let's see what the Commission of Government did to train them. Never in the history of this island was the chance better to train our people in independence. The dole could have been a blessing in disguise, for it was the first time in Newfoundland history that poor people had a regular income, and this is what could and should be done. It could have been tried out on a small scale. First, two of us were sent into St. John's by the people of Trinity South in 1939 because things had come to such a pass that life was unbearable, owing to mismanagement by those

in authority. The flour was full of weevils and rope — unpalatable, nauseating. I knew what was the matter, as from 18 to 24 years of age I had been at sea, three years of that in the grain trade, sometimes at sea for 117 days. If your flour tanks weren't steamed at least once a year, the weevils would over-top you and in the flour tanks you had more weevils than flour. The flour was good but a high wheat content, which lends easily to rope and weevils. I visited the Furness sheds. The sheds in August were packed to the metal roofs with flour which had been there nearly a month, although we had nearly a weekly service to the old country, and in the summer months only a monthly supply of flour should be kept on hand. The winter it did not matter, as the cold weather would keep the flour in good condition. I contacted those in authority but could not get to see them, although 11,000 people had sent me in from the Broads to Lead Cove. That was the fatherly, beneficial dictatorship we were under! I saw a few heads of departments, but no soap. We saw the Commissioner for Natural Resources, and here I come to where our people could have been lifted out of this credit system. We had an income even if it was only six cents per day, but how did we get it? First go to the little dictator, the relieving officer, with a note; and then to the local peddler who had friends at court. Mind you, they were sure you would not learn anything, no, you weren't grown up. Consequently, you could only turn in your note at the peddler and take out the bit of pork, the bit of tea, sugar, beef and last but not least, the weevilly flour — good flour that was spoiled by the indifference and ignorance of the Department of Public Health and Welfare.

While travelling from Winterton to Hant's Harbour I came across a small party, two cars. They were boiling up. I made enquiries and found out it was the Whitfield Laite Baritone Troupe, "baritoning", singing the glories of co-operation to a starving people. I had just done about 150 miles, a lot of it on foot; I had an intimate close-up of every village from Lead Cove to the Broads, had figures on how TB had increased in each village. I was not in a good frame of mind, because the thought struck me forcibly that I was always intrigued with the idea of Nero fiddling while Rome burnt, but I never thought I would see Newfoundland starve while Laite "baritoned".

<sup>1</sup>Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933 Report (Cmd. 4480, 1933).