

against unity of thought and ideas. Indeed, our very origin is rooted in disunity. With us, the melting-pot of nationalism has worked very slowly. Hundreds of years ago our country was peopled with English, Irish and Scotch, and even today their assimilation into a national unity is not complete. We proclaim public holidays in honour of England, Ireland and Scotland, but where is our Newfoundland day? Why, even our very national ode was composed by one who was not a Newfoundlander. We boast of our English, Irish and Scotch descent, but who boasts that he is a Newfoundlander? Is not all this wrong? Should not the state of things be rectified? Is it not time that we awoke to the fact that we are first of all Newfoundlanders and not the citizens of any country thousands of miles across the seas? Let us acknowledge our national obligations, take pride in the fact that we are Newfoundlanders, and acknowledge the duty we owe this land. And the first duty — the first obligation — is the duty of unity; the duty of joining our strength and our numbers in the common interests of our common country.

I know there are members of this Convention who entertain ideas of merging our individuality with other countries, of absorbing our nationhood with other peoples. Such things, in view of the great vital issue which now faces us, I regard as being of secondary importance — things that properly belong not to the present, but to the future — things for the people of Newfoundland to consider as a self-governing dominion. I regard them as issues which should not be allowed to destroy the unity, or enervate the thoughts of the people at this juncture. But let me add, that I deny to no man his right to advocate any form of government he may choose, and if a general election were called in this country, there is a free scope for the confederate, the unionist, the labourer, the socialist, and all those who wish to present their belief for the endorsement of the people. All such things come within the sphere of a free democracy. But I emphasise, that the issue today is not a party issue, it is a national issue, an issue of emergency, of saving the country, of saving the treasury, of saving the resources of the people while there is yet time. It is a situation where we must put Newfoundland first, before all else, before the aims of this Convention, before the designs of the Commission government,

before the wishes of the Dominions Office or the British government. We must put first things first. All else must be brushed aside in the interest of Newfoundland. If that interest demands that we should convert this assembly into a purely Newfoundland assembly, that should be done. If it demands that we ignore the rules and constitution of this Convention that should be done. If it demands we should send a delegation to London, demanding a general election in the spring of 1947, that should be done. Anything and everything should be done to ensure that there is no delay, that there is no time lost in restoring the control of our destinies to the hands of our own people. If we have any rights at all in our own country, the right of free action or free speech, then these rights should be exercised to obtain for us the right of responsible government.

Now we come to this matter of confederation with Canada. Propaganda, inspired right here in Newfoundland, has been appearing in certain sections of the Canadian press, specially designed to injure Newfoundland by misrepresentation of facts. There is a lot of talk about this affair of submerging our century-old nationhood with another country, and I expect we shall hear more, much more of it in the future. For the present I merely say this: if Canada is prepared to accept us in confederation, then be assured it is only because she wants something we have, and that she wants it very much. If she wants us, she wants us for her benefit, not for ours. And if she offers us one dollar, you can be certain that she counts on getting two or three of ours in return. Remember this, to any such deal Great Britain must be a party, and so it would all boil down to a clever game between Canada and Great Britain in which they would take the winnings and Newfoundland would be the pawn. As commonsense people, I ask you to remember this when you are being deluged with the gilded story of the lovely things Canada is going to do for us, of how grand we will live with two chickens in every pot and every man a millionaire. Let us remember that this is simply a repetition of the siren song that has lured many an unlucky country to its doom. It is the sugar on the pill, the bait in the trap. Such was the method used in luring us into Commission government and the valley of the dole in 1933. The little countries of Europe have heard that song, the Maritime