

then this little country will need help. Where will we turn for help when it comes? Will we come crawling again to the British government, or will we go first and crawl to Canada? No sir, I shall not vote for responsible government in the referendum.... So far as Commission government is concerned, I want that to be submitted to the people too. I think they should have the right to vote for it or against it if they want to. I shall vote against Commission government in the referendum, but here in this Convention I shall vote to give the people the chance to vote for it if they want to. I am not one of those who are going around damning Commission government. I am not one of those who can't see any good in the Commission's 14 year record, who refuse to give them any credit. They have done some good you know, and I am happy to give them credit for it. They have not done so much good as some of our people think, but they have done some, and we should praise them for it. Commission government, sir, is the price we paid for ruining our people and our country under responsible government. We made a mess of things under responsible government, and Britain had to take us over, but first responsible government had to go, and Commission government had to take its place. We needed help back in 1933-34 in the worst kind of way. Britain was in a position then to give us some help, in those days before she was washed up and plunged into poverty by the war; she was able to help us, and she did help us. We should be eternally grateful to her for it, and we should be eternally proud of the fact that we were able to help her a little bit with our money during the war.

I am not one of those who go around saying Great Britain forced Commission of Government on us in 1934, nor am I one of those who go around trying to say that Great Britain is trying to force any kind of government on us now. I don't think that. I am firmly convinced that she wants all of us to have a thoroughly free choice in deciding what form of government we shall have in Newfoundland. We have been told that Britain would like to see us join up with another British country. I don't know about that, but if she would she is not trying to force us to do it. I dare say it is true that the mother country would like us to throw in our lot with another British country. It seems reasonable enough; but that she

is trying to force us to do it, I simply don't believe.

Sir, in the referendum I shall vote against Commission government. I am all in favour of our people having the chance to vote for Commission if they want to, but as for myself ... I don't think that Commission government ever can succeed, nor can ever give our people the kind of government they need and want. The Commission government are straight and honest. They don't rob the public chest — of that I am quite sure. I believe they are trying to do their best, but their best is not good enough. So long as we stay under Commission form of government, or if we are under responsible government, we shall have our present unjust system of taxation. They cannot change it. This unjust system of taxation crushes the life out of our people, drives up the cost of living, and the cost of production in our main industries, makes it impossible for Newfoundland's main industries to compete with the industries of other countries, unless they pay our producers just barely enough to exist on. So long as we have this unjust system of taxation the only way our main industries, especially our fisheries, can compete with the industries of other countries is by paying our producers, our fishermen especially, a smaller share than the producers and fishermen of other countries get. Our fishermen are forced to have a lower standard of life.

Mr. Chairman, it matters not what form of government we may have in this country, so long as that unjust system of taxation is kept on us; so long as our wicked customs duties are kept on; so long as our government uses customs duties to collect the bulk of their revenue.... I will give you just one example of what I mean. Last year, 1947, our bank fishery was pretty successful. The fishermen who toiled on our highliner in the bank fishery, the *Freda M*, what did they get? Around \$1,550 per man. That was counted pretty good, wasn't it? And yet what do we find? We find that other Fortune Bay fishermen, toiling on other vessels, Nova Scotia bankers, who got about the same quantity of fish in the same year, were paid \$1,000 more than the *Freda M*'s men, I mean \$1,000 per man more — in fact over \$1,000 per man. I am not blaming the owners of the *Freda M*; I am not saying one word against them, because I know that it cost a lot more to fit out the *Freda M* than it cost to fit out the Nova Scotia