

that the Ottawa delegation themselves have not been able to explain one figure of what is contained in the Grey Book — *not one figure*.

Now Mr. Chairman, in rising to make a few remarks on this confederation issue now before the Convention, I must confess that I do so with a sense of some discouragement and even disappointment. For when I consider the political situation which exists in Newfoundland today, the bewilderment which has been created in the minds of some of our people, the disgust and even the bitterness in others, it proves to me beyond all doubt that far more harm has come out of this Convention than good. It tells me that neither myself nor any other delegate can take any great pride in the position we have helped to create. It is said that sometimes good comes out of evil, but such has not been the case of this Convention. When I look back over the long period that we have spent in fruitless discussion, wasting our own time and the people's money, in trying to do something which we should not have been asked to do — in allowing ourselves to be diverted into this political cul-de-sac — I honestly feel that we, all of us, owe an apology to the people who sent us here. For months, I think about 16 months, we have been engaged in what I regard as a wasteful task of finding out the economic condition of this country, when the truth is that we could have been told every last detail concerning our financial and economic condition on the very first day this Convention opened its doors.

For months we have been squabbling over matters which have already been decided by those who control this country — seeking solutions to questions, the answers to which were already stored away in the files of some government office. But even more regrettable than the useless friction and bad feeling which has been created in this Convention, is the manner in which this present set-up has affected and upset the temperament of the people of the country. This mock parliament, it is obvious, has spread its harmful influence of political controversy to every town and settlement in Newfoundland. Through the government radio broadcast the people have been invited, even encouraged, and given ringside seats at this political burlesque. And, like the spectators at any street brawl, they have been infested with the spirit of animosity, argument and abuse which has been broadcast

from this very chamber. What is the result? It is that which I forecast on the first week this Convention assembled. Settlement is divided against settlement, district against district, neighbour against neighbour. Everyone has been infected with his own particular political ideas, irrespective of whether they understand what they are talking about or not. I say, Mr. Chairman, that this was the preconceived idea of the United Kingdom government and the Commission government, when they jointly brought about this Convention idea.

Now Mr. Chairman, this setting of our people at one another's throats is one of the things for which those who have set up this stupid Convention should never be forgiven. There is no excuse for it. But what makes this even worse is the fact that there are indications, strong indications, that the whole thing was deliberately planned to create political disorder in our country, to muddle the people's minds with a hotch-potch of ideas. And this, remember, in the case of a people which has been kept in political ignorance for 14 years. To expect them, the average man or woman in this country, to understand and separate the qualities attaching to such varied forms of government as responsible government, Commission government, confederation with Canada, union with the United States of America and what have you — to expect I say, our people to have a knowledge of these forms of government, to understand the multitude of debatable issues which go with them, to be able to say to what extent we would benefit or suffer by attaching themselves to any one of them — I say, to set this Convention and the people of the country to such a task, I regard as being inspired either by a sense of stupidity or with the deliberate desire of injuring us. To repeat what I have so often stated before: was there ever such a farce perpetrated on an innocent people? It is my personal opinion that it is all simply the working out of a shrewdly conceived plan. First Newfoundland would be divided politically, and then it would be destroyed politically.

I remember I was one of those who went on a wild-goose chase with a delegation to England, half expecting that we would be able to do something on behalf of the people. But when I look back now, my feeling is that if I were a wealthy man I would repay to the treasury of this country