

I am not a pessimist. There are a certain amount of encouraging things and given a fair amount of stability, these encouraging things are going to come to the forefront and make things a little more easy for our people. We have to go a long way to set up a standard of living as comfortable as we would want to enjoy life with. There has been a great deal of vying with one another as we have shouted about our great race of people; the great stock they came from...

Mr. Fudge Better than the best.

Mr. Chairman Do not interrupt the speaker unless you have a point of order.

Mr. Burry Better than the best. We have talked about their courage and dogged determination. I have experience enough to know, and I cannot close my eyes to the fact that this great stock of people have had to undergo some of the cruellest, gruelling experiences, hardships and privations during this generation, and I have seen the blush fading from their cheeks; I have seen the sparkle go from their eyes and I have seen them reduced to discouragement and despair, and they cannot go much further; a certain percentage of our people have had just about as much as they can stand and still maintain their dogged determination.

I have great faith in the future. I really believe we have seen the worst, given a fair amount of world stability. But it is no use for us to paint a bright, glowing picture and think we are doing justice to the people. Those of us who would like to see a few shady lines in this picture are not unpatriotic. We are not backing down on the people just because we are trying to see the thing in its real state — the realities as they exist today and the prospects we have for the future. I have figures which I could give you to tell you what happened even last year in my own district, of the amount of privation and need that existed: 641 individuals receiving dole last winter, and that did not include the Indians, 300 of them, most of them were on dole rations last year. Somewhere around 900 people receiving dole out of a population of 5,500, one out of every six. From some places men could get to Three Rapids Estate and the Labrador Development,¹ so we can imagine the very much more concentrated privation and hunger there were in other places, and from what

I can gather, things are even worse. You would have to go back into the worst dole days to find anything comparable, even providing our government can send in the necessary supplies.

Mr. Chairman I am sorry to interrupt you, Rev. Burry, but it is my proposal to rise until eight o'clock, when I shall be glad to hear you continue your address. Before doing so, I direct your attention to the following letter:

Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland
November 17, 1947.

Francis J. Ryan, Esq.,
Assistant Secretary,
National Convention.

Dear Sir:

Replying to yours of November 15, I have arranged to have the Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evening sessions recorded and they will be rebroadcast as quickly as it is possible to do so, bearing in mind our present obligations of contracts.

Yours sincerely,
George R. Williams

[The Convention recessed until 8 pm]

Mr. Burry Mr. Chairman, when the session closed this afternoon I was about to observe that this Convention is very anxious to have its work completed and I am in sympathy with that. I would like to have it over as quickly as possible. But I am wondering if fate has not had some hand in delaying this Economic Report. Perhaps if we had had it last fall or spring we would not see the true position of the country as we see it at the present time....

I was about to say also, that in treating this subject in a bright and cheerful way, we are not treating the people of this country fairly. We have to recognise the struggle that they have had in the past and the struggles that they are bound to have in the immediate future. I do not want to be too pessimistic. I do not want to dwell upon this too much; but the other side of it has been given such importance that I feel someone should show that not every side of our life and economy is as bright as some would have us think. It was pointed out here the other day, in all seriousness, that 90% of our people own their own homes. That fact was taken from the census and is an interesting fact. But that does not tell the whole story. We know

¹Three Rapids Estate and the Labrador Development Company were small timber companies operating in Labrador.