

in our sinking fund? I say that statement is not true on the basis of the reply. Not a cent has been plundered, and in common fairness that statement must be proved or it must be retracted. We must draw a line somewhere with these charges of graft, of corruption and plundering. Talk of faith — how can we have faith if \$1.75 million can be robbed and nothing done about it? Or if we can sit back and smile, as if the amount plundered is so much chickenfeed, and is so commonplace that we can afford to take it in our stride and forget about it? I am not going to forget about it.

Mr. Chairman What steps can the Convention take in the matter? If there has been any suggestion of criminal libel, that is a matter of no concern to me or to the Convention. The person or persons who made it, if called upon to prove it or otherwise, would have to go before a jury of peers. We are not sitting as a court of trial. I am Chairman of a fact-finding body. I wish all reference to libel would be dropped, as there is no suggestion that we are going to try it.

Mr. Smallwood I am not suggesting legal action, I am suggesting this: Major Cashin made the statement in public session ... that Newfoundland has been plundered of \$1.75 million in our sinking fund — a most serious, grave, shocking statement, calculated if not disproved, if accepted as truth, to undermine all confidence and all faith in Newfoundland. Therefore what I suggest is either Mr. Cashin should proceed to prove his statement or withdraw it.

Mr. Vardy I see absolutely no reason whatever for Major Cashin to prove his statement. Mr. Smallwood has not proven that Major Cashin was incorrect. He has not shown us how much of the sinking fund was spent in England to redeem or

buy up Newfoundland bonds. That document does not state that. Therefore he has not proven whether or not we lost money. Mr. Smallwood has not proved that Major Cashin was wrong when he said we had lost \$1.75 million.

Mr. Chairman Again I want to remind members that as far as I am concerned, so long as the proprieties of debate are observed, no member is going to be placed in a position where he has to defend his opinions. Major Cashin has expressed an opinion. If he chooses to defend that opinion, that is a matter for his discretion. Certainly as far as I am concerned, the question as to whether or not he proves it or disproves it is entirely up to himself. Again I want to say the proof of any statement made here, libellous or otherwise, is a matter with which I have no concern as a Chairman of this Convention.

Mr. Miller I wonder if each member will be supplied with a copy of the government's answer? I would much prefer to read it myself.

Mr. Chairman I will have them tomorrow. I am assuming that Major Cashin ... will wind up the debate by dealing with questions directed to him during the course of the debate. Therefore ... I would like it to be understood that if no member desires to address himself further on the Economic Report. I will thereupon call upon Major Cashin to wind the matter up. If any member has anything to say on the Economic Report, I wish he would take the floor.

Mr. Cashin In view of the fact that there are several questions outstanding to which I have not received answers, I am not in a position to go ahead and finish this afternoon....

[The committee rose and reported progress and the Convention adjourned]

November 20, 1947

Mr. Higgins Before, sir, we go on to the business on the order paper today I would like to submit to you and the Convention, an idea that I think is well worth our consideration. As you know, representatives of this country have been attending a convention at Geneva for many months, and have made a report in recent days to the government through Mr. Howell, Secretary for Customs. I suggest it would be most important for the members of this Convention to understand exactly what good is to be derived from the

meetings held at Geneva. For that purpose I propose that, if the Convention will agree to it, I will move that we have a private session at the completion of today's business, or at the earliest possible moment, with Mr. Howell, to get an understanding of what this whole business means for the country, for our trade, and for general customs duties. I don't know what time would be convenient or agreeable, but we might have it in the night, or have a private session tomorrow afternoon. It should be part of the Economic