

How vastly different is the whole prospect today. Canada is a rich and powerful nation — no longer a strange and foreign land, but a friendly neighbour in which many thousands of our own Newfoundland people are prospering at this very moment. And our Newfoundland people are educated today, they are better informed, they read the newspaper and magazines, they have radios, they have relatives and friends in Canada. No longer are they under the thumb of anyone, merchant or otherwise. They have full manhood suffrage, both men and women. And they have the secret ballot. And, sir, they have something more: they have experience of two forms of government, Commission and responsible.

There is, however, one thing which has not changed. The same policy of twisting and distorting and misrepresenting the facts is again to be seen. The tax scare, which worked so well in 1869, is again put to work.

But these despicable political dodges are a bit stale and ineffectual, and so the anticonfederates have coined a new one, the Labrador scare. "If we become part of Canada, Quebec will chisel us out of Labrador." Sir, these men in their desperation forget that our people know full well that Labrador was awarded to Newfoundland by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and that there is no way whatever to upset that award. They know further that the terms of union now before us contain a definite undertaking by the Canadian government that Labrador shall form part of the Province of Newfoundland. They know that the British North America Act, which even the Government of Canada must obey, distinctly and clearly lays down the condition that no territory of a province can be taken from it. That is one of the terms of union. This silly catch-cry will fail, sir, as will the old and mouldy wail about taxing people's property. I do not know whether these anticonfederates are aware of it, but it is strictly true to say that since the beginning of Canadian confederation some 80 years ago there never has been, and there is not now, any tax of any kind whatever imposed by Canada upon people's property.

It is a grave decision which faces our people today — the form and nature of their future government. Only three forms seem to have been considered at all, whether in this Convention or among the citizens. They are the Commission,

responsible and confederation forms. I understand, sir, that I am not permitted to discuss now either responsible or Commission government. I would have liked to do so, for neither of them is all good nor all bad. I must, however, bow to your ruling and confine myself to the third form, confederation, which proposes that Newfoundland should enter the Canadian union as the tenth province or partner. Notice, please, that it is not a case either of annexation or absorption or taking over. We go in as a partner, retaining our own identity, governing ourselves as to local matters, and sharing in the government of all Canada in matters of national interest. We will retain our own legislature right here in St. John's, with which nobody will interfere. We will also send elected members to represent us in the Canadian House of Commons, just as each province now does. We will not be a dependency without a word in our cheeks, but a partner with a full voice in Canada's councils, and complete control of local Newfoundland affairs.

Eighty years ago it might have been sound to say that to join in the union then would have been risky. The union had no assurance of success or even of continued existence. Today the prospect is far different. Those four weak provinces have grown and expanded into a mighty nation whose institutions have a world reputation for soundness and stability, and whose social, commercial and financial services are in the front rank of sane, modern development, and whose standard of living is far ahead of ours. If you doubt this latter statement, ask the people of the southwest coast, and of Labrador and northern Newfoundland, who are in constant touch with Canada. Truly, Canada has proved that in union there is strength, and it would now appear inevitable that had we joined the union in 1869, the Newfoundland people would be better off today. Of course the standard of living is higher in some parts of Canada than in other parts, just as in Newfoundland the people of the paper towns are better situated than those of the fishing settlements. These variations are inevitable in any country, as they depend on the resources of the particular locality. But there is no province of Canada which cannot show a better standard of living than we have experienced. That is a definite result of union, the system of taxation and distribution of revenue, and the power which