

desirability of resuming control of their own country and its affairs. And while on the few occasions when I spoke my piece I made it quite clear as to what I stood for, self-government for Newfoundlanders, I did so with a mental reservation that my stand in the final hours of this unique assembly would be governed by and was dependent on the final and unquestionable conclusions of the Economic Report.

Which brings me to the second conclusion, "that all the evidence available to us indicates that this position of self-support will continue in the foreseeable future". They have defined the "foreseeable future" as a three-year period, from now to 1950, and have thus gone far beyond the ordinary requirements of any finance minister in the presentation of a budget. But that is as it should be, for our task is somewhat different, and it is as much to instill courage and hope in the many faint hearts in our midst, as to prove to the country and the world in dollars and cents that Newfoundland can afford democracy.

It is this insistence in our terms of reference on the question of self-support that has pilloried us in the eyes of the world as a nation of paupers casting about on all sides for the inevitable hand-out. The figures listed on page 3 of this report should certainly give the lie to that assertion made so continuously by outsiders as well as the Cassandras in our midst. A people with \$80 million in savings, and \$100 million worth of life insurance protection, can hardly be considered paupers. And I don't believe for a moment that the merchants own all those savings and life insurance policies.

The Committee's opinion that the mercantile marine branch of the Railway should be separated from the Railway system generally, seems to be a sound one. I am not enough of an authority on shipping to go into this point at length, and will expect to hear more on it from someone like Captain Bailey. I have always felt that Newfoundland should have a mercantile marine. She did have one of the finest, and at one time, I believe, one of the largest for a country of her size and population in the world. There wasn't a port in the civilised world where the white sails and the house flags of Newfoundland vessels did not flash against the blue, year-in and year-out. It could be done again.

The section on Gander airport calls for com-

ment. I agree with the Committee's observation that, "It is the foreign airlines that profit through the operation of Gander airport, and it is these same airlines which should be made responsible for any deficits that may accrue in operation." Please let no one stand up and rave about the fact that so many Newfoundlanders are getting work at Gander. We are all aware of that. It is a good thing. But the airport cannot run itself. And it costs a lot less for the foreign airlines to run it with Newfoundland help than by importing their own, which would never be allowed anyway. Incidentally, while speaking of Gander, I should like to refer to a statement I made 12 months ago — I can hardly believe it — when the Gander airport section of Transportation Committee's report was being debated. In stressing the point now made again by the Economic Committee, the use of Gander at the expense of Newfoundland, I said in the heat of debate that Gander should have been closed down, if that was the best deal the government could make. That was not to be taken literally, but the intention was to convey my belief that a far better deal could have been made out of which Newfoundlanders would still have received employment, and that in addition, the country would not have to stand the expense of running the airport for the convenience of foreign airlines. The threat of closing down this vast airport would have brought the airlines to our way of thinking soon enough. The implication is, therefore, that no attempt was made to strike a better bargain and the conclusion reached by me is the same as that of the Economic Committee, that the airport was used by the British government for the furtherance of ends in the international field.

The revenues of the country are now approaching the staggering sum of nearly \$40 million. Yet for purposes of planning the shape of the foreseeable future, the Economic Committee has chopped that figure ruthlessly down to \$30 million. They have estimated that the expenditures can be kept within \$25 million, which is \$2 million above the figure that Finance Commissioner Wild, who should know, gave this Convention as the irreducible minimum — that is, the figure below which expenditures cannot drop in order to keep up the services now in existence. The Committee estimates an annual surplus of \$5 million, out of which various reconstruction and