

difficult year; that taxation should and can be reduced; that business, at present strangled, can be given a breathing space, and the purchasing power of the people increased; that our fisheries and industries can thereby be assisted towards recovery and prosperity; and that our really great and valuable resources can be intelligently used to bring about these benefits without the need of continuing the humiliating and extraordinary conditions that now exist."<sup>1</sup> Then I will read the second last paragraph of that historic document. "Before concluding, let me repeat the pledge recently made through the daily press, that one of my first acts will be the appointment of a committee, the members of which will serve without remuneration, to enquire into the desirability and feasibility of placing the country under a form of commission government for a period of years. In case the proposal is favourably reported upon, it will then be submitted to the electorate for their approval. No action will be taken that does not first have the consent of the people."

That is a definite pledge to the people of this country. On that pledge that party was elected to office. They carried out the first part of the program. A royal commission was appointed, came here in February or March 1933, made certain enquiries into the affairs of the country, officially, economically, personal and everything else. On February 28, 1933, the same gentleman, now the Prime Minister, introduced a resolution which I am not going to bore you by reading. It is interesting to note extracts from his talk on that momentous occasion. He said, "We are a part of the British Commonwealth of Nations and it is a proud boast that no British Dominion ever went back on its pledged word. Are we to be the first? What will it profit us if we retain responsible government and lose our souls, our honour, in the end?" Mr. Alderdice said — and I want this to be listened to attentively — he had always felt that after all the vote was a theoretical thing and not all that it was cracked up to be. He said, "In the new form" — meaning the Commission — "not one man will know the difference and he could see as a result of it more prosperity in the country." He could see more capital invested because capitalists would see they are taking no chances. Commenting on the conversion of our debt to 3% he said, "The United Kingdom

government will see to it that the steel interests of the United Kingdom give us a large share of their orders for ore. This means a prosperous Conception Bay. She will see that our codfish gets preference in British mandated territory." He wound up his remarks on this famous or infamous resolution: "And finally I speak on behalf of all Newfoundlanders when I say that we thank His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for the generous offer that they have made to us in our extremity. We are grateful for the promised development of our resources; we trust implicitly in their honourable intentions, feeling confident that a full measure of responsible government will be restored to the island when we have been placed upon a self-supporting basis and we fully, frankly and freely accept the Report and the conditions laid down in the White Paper and subscribe to the Address, the adoption of which I have now the honour to move."

These words speak for themselves. These resolutions were passed on November 29 or 30, 1933. The people were given to understand that certain things were going to happen. I defy any man to get up here or anywhere else and say one of these pledges was carried out. What happened? You, sir, as leader of the Opposition, asked that the resolution be deferred for a week. That was refused. You moved many amendments. All were turned down. After this legislation had been passed, and the Address to His Majesty forwarded, the British Parliament introduced the Newfoundland Act confirming these resolutions, in which it was stated that as soon as Newfoundland became self-supporting and upon request of the people, responsible government would be restored. That legislation was passed in Great Britain during the early part of December, 1933; and as pointed out by my friend Mr. Hollett, the Commission government was inaugurated, with pomp and ceremony, on 14 February, 1934. Every man who voted for that legislation, particularly those who were paid off with jobs, understood definitely that as soon as Newfoundland became self-supporting, responsible government would be restored. However I state authoritatively that Newfoundland suffered more hardship and privation than any time in its history. And, despite what my friend from Labrador has said, we have nothing to be grateful

<sup>1</sup>The quotation was taken from the recording of the proceedings.