

Now as you probably have gathered, I am not altogether sold on the idea of confederation. However, the profession of which my learned friend the Chairman, and Mr. Bradley and myself are members, demands of necessity that whether we like a case or not, whether we like the client who brings in the case or not, nevertheless, if we are retained to do a job we do that job to the best of our ability. We work hard to prepare it, and do all that needs to be done.

Now in this particular instance, and I refer to the work of the delegation that went to Ottawa, I and my co-delegates were retained by this Convention to discuss with the Canadian government the matter of the basis of union between Newfoundland and Canada. I can say quite truthfully that no matter what has been said in or what has been said out of the House, and no matter what jokes may have been made with respect to that Ottawa delegation and the time spent in Ottawa, and I myself probably added more to such type of jokes than any other single member, I can say quite truthfully that we did as good a job as any delegation from Newfoundland under the circumstances could have done. I can say to you quite truthfully that we had no officials of any kind to help us, no officials from the government, or the civil service to help us. We were six men appointed by this Convention. I don't even say the six best men that you have. A great number of you did not even choose to be part of that delegation, probably some of you better than the men who did go up. But, even with the lack of assistance that we had, we did do as good a job as we possibly could and I trust that you will understand me when now I take a different stand. Being a lawyer, as I explained to you, and doing cases for people that we don't like, and preparing cases that we don't like to do, nevertheless when we agree to do a job we do it to the best of our ability. I am stressing that point because I hope you will judge that I am competent and fair-minded enough to give honest advice to you with respect to union between the two countries on the basis of the facts as brought back from Ottawa.

To begin my argument to you today, let me quote from the reply we received from the Canadian government to our request for these discussions. It is contained in your Black Book:

The Canadian government is of the opinion that the questions to be discussed with the

delegation are of such complexity and of such significance for both countries that it is essential to have a complete and comprehensive exchange of information and a full and careful exploration by both parties of all the issues involved, so that an accurate appreciation of the position may be gained on each side.

Now you have read and heard it on many occasions, but I draw your attention to these words, and that is, that the questions to be discussed are of such complexity and of such significance for both countries that it is essential to have a complete and careful exploration by both parties; and again, at the end of that message: "so that an accurate appreciation of the position may be gained on each side". You see how important it was to the Canadian government to make their position very clear. They recognized the complexity and the seriousness of this approach. As you are aware, and as I said before to you, we had no expert assistance of any kind to help us. We applied to the Commission of Government to assist us in this matter, but the request was refused, so we went off with what we had to do the best we could....

On the Canadian side, the cabinet members designated to take part in the discussions were flanked by some of the top men of the civil service of Canada. Moreover, the problem of confederation had been under active study by this particular group since October of 1946, and actually Canada has been studying the proposition for some years past. As you are aware, our delegation had no such opportunity of preparation and certainly no such assistance during the discussions. In my opinion our delegation was not competent to fully discuss such an important matter without proper assistance, and without an adequate study of the problem.

I say quite sincerely that for any person, member of this Convention or not, to advise the people of this country to join in federal union with Canada without the necessary study of all the implications of such union, is nothing less than criminal. What, you ask, is the proper approach? In my opinion, before union should be recommended, a complete study of the Canadian system should be made by the various departmental heads of our civil service, to see and advise the effect such union would have. The heads of these