

be easy. This difficulty was specifically admitted in the *Report on the Financial and Economic Condition of Newfoundland* prepared for the members of this Convention.

It was most encouraging to see that the Convention did apply itself in the first instance to consideration of the economic. I must confess to some misgivings at the beginning as to whether there would be some young men or some elder statesmen in a constitutional hurry, who would want to get over the economic hurdle in a hurry by ignoring it. I was happy to see matters did not go so. There is much talk today, much questioning of whether or not we are self-supporting. A year of so ago I would have said that there was much surety of that. There seemed to be much surety, too, that the war had brought to us a great prosperity. All that wild talk of the great prosperity the war brought us was, as far as I am concerned, just so much unmitigated rot. It was not prosperity, if by prosperity you mean full and plenty, and some left over that could be put aside. In most cases where there was anything to spare it had to go to take up the slack, to replace and to restore what had rusted and rotted away in the years the locusts ate. All that came of the war jobs and dollars was that a few more Newfoundlanders than ever before came a little closer than ever before to achieving a decent standard of living.

It is encouraging to see today this great concern with the question of self-support; and, that, gentlemen, is a question upon which we must be as absolutely certain, one way or the other, as it is humanly possible to be before we go on to the constitutional issue. On making answer we shall have this in our favour that, I feel sure, no man here present thinks that the mere balancing of the national budget is indicative of a condition of self-support. To my mind, a surer measure of the extent to which we are self-supporting is the individuals' ability to balance his budget and have something to spare. This is the acid test, is every man who makes an honest effort to make a living able to make a decent living, and will he still be able to do so when conditions are no longer abnormal? And if you say to me that is taking an extreme view, I shall have to ask you just what men you are going to require to be satisfied with just how much less? I am quite prepared to admit that we live in a sparse and an

austere land. It yields a meagre, grey, ascetic existence, and that but unwillingly. I am prepared to agree that perhaps we cannot expect for our people the largesse and elaborate standards enjoyed by people richer in natural resources and accumulated capital. But there is a certain minimum standard of living consistent with human dignity. There is a little matter of three square meals a day, and a decent suit of clothes on the back, and a roof that doesn't leak over the head. We cannot be satisfied in conscience with less than that minimum. And if you say that any Newfoundlander should have to be so satisfied, then again I shall have to ask just what men you are going to require to be satisfied with just how much less. I know you are not going to tell me that we must be so satisfied. And I feel that you will be much concerned that matters shall be so resolved that in this island that latter question will never have to be asked.

It is not for me to seek to forecast what will come of our efforts and after our efforts, but I have high hopes that when our work is finished and the ultimate decision taken, we in this island shall come to know more spacious days than we have ever known, and that to our children after us, and to their children after them, it will be given to walk the ways of a more prosperous land in happiness, peace, and dignity.

**Mr. Smallwood** At the risk of wearying you, I rise in all sincerity and with more enthusiasm than I would like to show, to offer my congratulations to the last two speakers. They have, for the first time since this Convention opened, expressed the authentic voice of the people of Newfoundland.

**Mr. Brown** Hear! Hear!

**Mr. Smallwood** I am sure that the people of Newfoundland today, taken by and large, excepting a certain limited few, are completely uninterested in far-fetched and high-faluting questions of types and forms of government. I think they are tremendously preoccupied with questions of bread and butter. It has been my experience, and the experience of these two younger men; theirs, of course has been such as to bring them constantly and almost continuously into intimate touch with the real people; for the co-operative workers have nothing else to do so far as their work is concerned but to be in constant touch with the people who make the wheels go