

ing expenses]

Mr. Smallwood I am disappointed. Here is a report which deals with the spending of many millions of dollars. The Committee felt it wanted this information to help the Convention determine the status of the country economically and financially. So far the report has not been debated from that standpoint. We have not said one word on what the future is likely to be.

Mr. Newell In order to alleviate Mr. Smallwood's disappointment, I would like to say I find the report very interesting and instructive, particularly to those of us who can hardly remember when we saw a road last. The question of communication is an important one. It is a fine thing to open up this country by a transinsular road; but we should also give thought to opening up the country inside Newfoundland as well. There are vast stretches being impaired economically due to the lack of communications. There are parts of this country where fishermen are impaired in getting bait because on a day that is too stormy to go in a boat, there is no other way to get it. Large sections have practically no roads. The section I know best has nothing but barely community roads, you have to stretch the imagination to call some of them roads. There are no inter-community connections.... I would like for us to give some thought to that. Another thing is the miles of road privately owned, but yet used by the public. For instance the Bowater company has built a considerable number of miles of road and done a great deal to open up the remoter parts of the country. They deserve a great deal of credit for it. Our road policy should dovetail into the policy of these companies in such a way that one might augment the other. It does not come within the scope of this Convention to discuss these things. But the economic policy of the future of roads whether public or private is a very important consideration.

Mr. Hollett On page 2¹ — "It will thus be seen that there are 1,063.3 miles of motorable road on the Avalon Peninsula, and 978.8 miles in the remainder of the Island." I can understand why my friends across the way should hang their heads. When I think of the millions of dollars spent on the Avalon Peninsula, I should have expected the Commission of Government, since they started road building, would have built more

outside. I come from the beating heart of the country. We have very few roads — 42 miles to Botwood; four miles of paved road to the golf course, a few other miles to Badger; that is all apart from the track leading to Halls Bay. I am thinking of that part of the country. The government did think of it. They actually started out to build a road, four miles to the golf course — they left off there. The next year they decided to pave the road from Grand Falls to Botwood. They spent one whole year renovating and reconditioning, spent thousands of dollars making it ready to pave next year. The next year they forgot about it. If they did start now, they would have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to recondition it again. That is the kind of treatment we got. Not that by talking about it I expect it is going to mean anything. I think if the \$20,000 spent on roads were spent on the welfare of the country generally, it would have been better. Speaking of roads (and I am going to be called a heretic for saying this) I am wondering if we are not barking up the wrong tree when we prate about roads. For the last 40 years we have heard what would happen if we had a system of roads throughout. I am beginning to doubt it, because if there was any truth in it, surely the people by now would have had the roads. What do we get if we do get transinsular roads? I was wondering if it would help any if we put the road there, although it is bound to come some day. Who will use it? Where will they go? What shall they carry? Would it be much cheaper to use the railway? When I think of the waste of public money on roads — money just dug into the earth! If half the money used on roads had been used to help the fishermen catch their fish, then we would have been much better off. I do say the report is, factually, an excellent one; but as to the future, it is in the air. They plan on putting a road to Port-aux-Basques; all I can say is, God help the surplus if they do it by the method they are spending now.

Mr. Higgins We have to admit that there has been a lot of money spent around the Avalon Peninsula, and I see every justification for it. We say, as far as the island is concerned, "Avalon first; the rest of the country afterwards." I have to admit that the money might have been better spent if the amount spent on paving roads, particularly this year, had been employed joining up

¹Volume II:85.