

Mr. MacDonald I wouldn't have asked, Mr. Chairman, only the invitation was put to any person who wished to rise. I could have very well left it alone for that matter. But it's not my intention to address the Convention at any length on the subject matter now before the Chair, as it is more than probable that most of it will be repeated again when the question of recommendations arises. We have heard various opinions and many contradictions on the subject of the proposals for union with Canada. What results as far as the members of this Convention and the people of the country are concerned is a matter of opinion. I take it, Mr. Chairman, that the idea of holding our sessions in public, and that of installing the microphones in this chamber, was for the purpose of acquainting our people as to what was going on and informing them as to the economic and financial position of this country of ours and giving them the facts. I repeat, Mr. Chairman, the facts.... I submit that a good many of our thinking people are more bewildered than they were when we started 16 months ago. We have disagreed and wrangled about every point that has been brought forward in our various debates, often descending to tactics more worthy of a gathering in a pub or the oft-quoted beer parties than that of a body of men gathered together to consider the future of our country. We have individually criticised and abused almost everything from the British Dominions Office down to the Commission of Government to the Convention itself and the members thereof, I might add. Now do not let us forget this part. That whatever our individual opinions may be of the necessity of this Convention, we must realise that the people who voted in the election of 1946 did so in all good faith, and sent their respective delegates to this Convention not only to make recommendations as to possible forms of government, but also to get information for them so that when the time came for the referendum they would be in a position to decide intelligently as to the type of government which in their opinion would be the best in the interests of Newfoundland. Have we succeeded in this? Or has our time been more occupied in using this Convention as a forum from which to preach our own particular form of political ideology? In this very important matter of the Ottawa proposals for confederation ... we are faced with something

that may well mean the future welfare or otherwise of Newfoundland to generations yet unborn. We have heard these proposals very ably, if somewhat heatedly at various times, supported by Mr. Smallwood. We have heard them also very ably and sometimes heatedly criticised by Major Cashin and other speakers. We have heard a lot about sales taxes, excise taxes, etc., even hidden taxes such as shoe taxes and gasoline taxes and so on. But we have not stopped to explain that outside of local sales tax, we are possibly paying all these taxes every time we buy these goods from Canada at the present time....

Mr. Chairman, we are nearing the end of our deliberations as a National Convention. In the course of our work we have accumulated a great quantity of information, both essential and non-essential, and in what way are we to present all the facts to the people is the question which concerns me considerably. I doubt that the members of this Convention can even agree on facts. I do not know yet what choices of government will be placed on the ballot papers. But whatever they may be, the people are entitled to know the pros and cons of each form of government placed before them. If this is not done, then we have failed miserably in our efforts of the past 16 months. The people want to know whether confederation will lower their cost of living and thus raise their standard of living. And I don't think it can be contradicted, and I state this on very good authority, Mr. Chairman, that the cost of a month's groceries in New Brunswick is considerably less than one half of that in Newfoundland at the present time in spite of the austerity programme. And I state that on good authority. They will also want to know as to whether it is to their advantage to have the whole Dominion of Canada open to their sons and daughters when they are unable to get remunerative positions at home. That's another matter that's never been brought up. Of if they wish to advance themselves more quickly in their chosen trades or professions and not as at the present time be treated as foreigners and be admitted on a quota. These things and scores of others they will want to know. I agree with Mr. Higgins that the proposals are good as a fair and equitable basis on which to work, and undoubtedly the proper authorities who would finalise the deal, if the people so wish, would recognise this and possibly get further