

of our country." I have observed that there are those among us who are very hopeful of seeing a sentiment develop in favour of this or that form of government. In the early stages of what can only be described as an investigating committee, that is very bad. One delegate is a proponent of this, another an adherent of that, and it would be very unfortunate should any attempt be made by a proponent of any form to superimpose his preconceived notions, fixed beliefs and fore-ordained opinions on this assembly. There should be no splitting into groups. Supposing your district does want confederation and mine responsible government, what of it? Districts are but the components of what make up Newfoundland, so let us confine ourselves to factual data only. Furthermore, any attempt to narrow the issues or restrict the choice of the people would not only be foolhardy, it would be positively dangerous. The majority of our people are not concerned with the name of tomorrow's government, but that the administration of tomorrow should provide, inasmuch as governments can, more comprehensive and higher educational standards, more and better communications, in short a general raising of the standard of living which, to say the least, is much lower than in any English-speaking country of the western hemisphere.

The solution is not to be found in the political field, it will be found in the future prosperity and consequent happiness of that family over the way, for "a nation is as poor as its people." I personally do not care what name is given to their set form of government; I'll vote for it as soon as it can be shown it was in the best interest of Newfoundland. Today we are at the cross-roads. "Whence from here and whither tending?" I ask. These are important questions and it devolves upon the members to be exacting in their research and honest in their opinions, not guided by sentiment. The economy of Newfoundland is not basically different in 1946 from what it was in 1934 — the influx of outside capital during the abnormal war years cannot in the long run have any appreciable effect upon our ability to be self-sufficient — the internal market for our products cannot in the foreseeable future be greatly enlarged. Newfoundland still has 42,000 square miles of territory with only a third of a million people. That confronts us with a large problem for it obviously means a too-wide diffusion of our

national effort, which in turn greatly weakens the ability of any centralised government to maintain anything like fair provisions for the communications so essential to the people of the small towns and villages. I would hesitate to vote for any form of government before all the facts are assimilated. For after all, the real trouble is the age-old business game of trying to make enough money on the goods sold to enable the businessman to keep his personnel happy, and his stores and warehouses in fairly decent order. The three meals and tight roof argument may be basically sound, but it is only a half-truth, for the question is not how we'll eat and what we'll wear. It goes deeper than that, for it must not be forgotten that no government in itself can go on providing for the welfare of its people unless its resources can support its economy. Government of course can provide legislation, social and otherwise, that will in some measure contribute to that end, but the burning questions are, can we provide new industries, seek out and develop new resources? There is a dire need for newer methods in our saltfish industry; and our external trade, the very essence and life-blood of our economy, is, as it was 50 years ago, still contingent upon the ability of foreign markets to purchase our exportable products. These and other factors tend to make the task facing the Convention a case of arithmetic plus sound common sense, so let us dispense with our pet opinions and continue the investigation on our financial and economic affairs on the broad plane of securing facts only.

I cannot agree that the Convention is a farce and a fiasco. I am willing to explore every possibility, analyse every issue, and without identifying myself with any group or following any star, to measure everything by the yardstick of the best for Newfoundland. I would vote for the retention of Commission of Government, if after the mobilisation of all the facts I find it is best for the country, but I shall as readily vote against it if the opposite is the case. Logically I believe in responsible government — what free man doesn't — but it is not a question of what I believe, it's what is best for Newfoundland.... I do not pretend to have any notion how the country would vote tomorrow, but I am convinced that the widest publicity should be given to the findings and deliberations of the Convention. If we conduct our investigation in the proper