

the House of Assembly passed the second Bait Act in 1887 and sent over Sir Robert Thorburn and Sir Ambrose Shea to London on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The result of this delegation and its conference was the ratification of the Bait Act by the British government, and the weakening of French influence, leading to their final withdrawal in 1904 after two and a half centuries. And as recently as 1927, a Newfoundland delegation to London, headed by Prime Minister Walter Monroe, presented a case prepared in Newfoundland that won for Newfoundland 110,000 square miles of Labrador, the greatest asset this country has, and which, come what may, we mean to hold. These are a few outstanding examples of what other Newfoundland delegations to London accomplished. Their accomplishments are no reflection on the calibre of the members of the delegation from this Convention. But it is certainly pertinent to point out to the country the great difference between these delegations of earlier days and that delegation of recent date. From 1857 to 1927, every delegation that went from this house to London went with authority — the authority that is vested in members of a responsible government, elected by the people to represent, talk and act for them in matters of the gravest and most far-reaching concern. That is a fact we should not lose sight of — it is the most significant fact of the London delegation's visit. It sticks out like a sore thumb.

Won't we recognise it? Can't we get it into our heads as a people that the thing that makes all the difference is authority? I repeat it — the authority that goes with being a government of the people. True, the delegates to the National Convention were elected by the people. True, the delegates to London — not counting the Chairman — were elected by the Convention, but we have no authority, they have no authority, to deal, bargain or otherwise engage in the legitimate functions of a government. Not so long ago we were told indirectly by members of the Bar and the Bench that we were what Mr. Bailey referred to as a "glorified debating society" — and our delegation went to London to hear substantially the same statement fall in curt tones from the lips of Lord Addison.

I am not surprised that Lord Addison said what he did. We know we have no such authority. In fact, some of us here have been trying to impress

that fact on others. Our principal objection to sending a delegation to Ottawa for terms on which the people of this country might be asked to vote themselves into confederation — into a set-up from which there would be no backing out — was that having no such authority to bargain or negotiate we would be false to our trust by helping to lead our countrymen down a blind alley. We knew that we had no authority. The delegation knew it. My blessing to them just the same, that as real Newfoundlanders they made the most of their opportunity, when face to face with the real government of Newfoundland, the Dominions Office, to go further than in strict legality they may have been entitled to go under our much-quoted and widely-misunderstood terms of reference. At least five of them believed they were doing the right thing for their country, and were not to be hidebound by rules and regulations. I would have done the same had I been there. I have read their memorandum to the Secretary of State; and I see nothing in it that could be objected to by any Newfoundlander. To my mind the split in the ranks of the delegation is the most disappointing feature of the visit to London.

And yet even without the authority of a government, and despite disagreement in their ranks, the delegation was successful in other matters besides obtaining bald answers to bald questions. It is obvious that they have been able to speed up certain acts of the Commission of Government, which it is alleged the Commission was already contemplating, and which, no doubt when accomplished, the said Commission will take the credit for, such as in all likelihood the reduction of the public debt by the application of the interest-free loans.

The delegation was quite justified in arguing the case they did argue, even though they may not have had the authority. As Mr. Crosbie said, they asked for nothing that was not fair and reasonable. No one in this Convention was looking for gifts or handouts.... As far as I'm concerned, we've had enough of that kind of talk and attitude of mind in this country — too much.

So in actual fact the delegation has accomplished more than I expected. This Convention had a job to do to assess the financial and economic position of Newfoundland. The Convention found that it was necessary to consult