

quite competent to handle this question. I am not prepared to discuss that at the moment, though I am prepared to state that Commission government will never legislate upon the subject. There are few, if any, men today here who do not know that Commission government is nothing more than the agent of the British government, which is nothing more than the agent of Great Britain.

Mr. Chairman The present Commission of Government is not an agent of the British government. It is functioning for and legislating the affairs of Newfoundland and it does not act as agent for any person or government outside of Newfoundland.

Mr. Bradley But at the same time the Commission government is in constant consultation with the Dominions Office, although I do not believe for one moment that Commission government would attempt to impose confederation without the consent of the British Parliament.

I tried this afternoon to point out to this assembly that political speeches had nothing to do with the question, and that the merits or demerits of confederation had nothing to do with this debate. The question was whether or not we would go seeking information at an opportune time.... Should the motion be shelved, the Convention would have to start all over again when it had the facts concerning the financial and economic condition of this country, and my effort is for the purpose of clarification to try and pin down the issue until we get something done and find out where we are.... I propose the following amendment: that the words after "That" in the first line of Mr. Penney's amendment be stricken out and that the words "and shall not proceed to Ottawa before January 1, 1947" be inserted in the original motion after the word "Newfoundland" at the end of the third paragraph.

This strikes out the indefiniteness which completely fills Mr. Penney's amendment and it adds to the original motion something which effects what Mr. Penney desires — a reasonable delay before the delegation goes to Ottawa. It means that the machinery be put in motion at once so that the facts would be available when required.... The whole object is to appoint a delegation and allow it to work in Newfoundland until the time would present itself to proceed to Canada. And their departure is still a matter which lies in the hands of this Convention. In the same way, I

propose to see to it that another resolution is introduced and adopted in connection with enquiries with the United Kingdom. I feel this amendment should meet with the approval of all those who want the facts.... I move this amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Burry I rise to second this second amendment, because I think it is the right and proper thing to do. I have been informed and enlightened considerably by this debate this afternoon. At first I thought it was a waste of time. Now I do not consider it such and I have very much pleasure in supporting this second amendment.

Mr. Higgins Mr. Chairman, can you inform the Convention by what date this House will have to finish its business in order to have a referendum in the spring or a referendum in the fall?

Mr. Chairman I imagine that in order to have a referendum in the spring of 1947 the business of this Convention would have to finish by the end of January or sometime in February, 1947. If it is desired to have a referendum in the autumn of 1947, then the business of this Convention should finish by the end of May or early in June. It has to be remembered that the recommendations from this Convention will have to go to the United Kingdom government after having first been considered by the Secretary for Dominions Affairs, and from the cabinet will be presented to Parliament, say in the form of a White Paper, to be considered by the House of Commons and then by the House of Lords. These are opinions on my own part only and for which I have no actual authority but, in view of the fact that we have the advantage of the presence of Professor Wheare with us at the moment, I might ask him, on your behalf, to give us his views on the question submitted by Mr. Higgins.

Professor Wheare I would not like to add anything to what has been said by the Chairman. I think the procedure outlined by the Chairman is correct....

Mr. Higgins Thank you.

Mr. Hollett Mr. Chairman, by what authority do we have the right to send a delegation from this Convention to Canada? I fear that if we send a delegation we might find ourselves in an awkward position weeks or months hence by being told that we had no such authority. I think there is something in Mr. Bradley's amendment.

Mr. Chairman There is no doubt in my mind