

might be over. So if there is another way of doing it, possibly that would be the better thing to do. Let's get the thing straight. There is a lot of talk about the mysterious secret documents, and the members of the Convention may have a feeling that we have been living in an atmosphere of conspiracy and plots now for 14 months. A lot of members may feel that there are some dark and mysterious documents closely guarded under lock and key by the members of the Ottawa delegation. There is no such thing. The fact of the matter is these Black Books contain 99.99% of what was given us in Ottawa. There is one document only, to my knowledge, speaking from memory ... which has not been put in the Black Books, and that is the one to which I have just made reference in reply to Major Cashin. One only. All other documents appear in the Black Book in their final, official form.... Please let us have done with any further suggestions of secret, dark, mysterious documents under lock and key, that we are trying to keep back from the Convention. That is a completely wrong impression. All trash and nonsense....

**Mr. Cashin** I don't know if it is in the Black Book. The point I make is this: it is a very important document, and even if it is the only one that is left out, the point is it should have been tabled here the first day, because it relates to the public debt of Canada, and a comparison has to be made between the public debt of Canada and the public debt of Newfoundland. I tabled a question on this ten days ago, and I find now that my questions have gone off to Ottawa when the actual information is here in the city.

**Mr. Chairman** The fact that any memorandum or document in the possession of members may overlap the so-called Black Books is no reason for withholding it from the members of the Convention. On the contrary, in certain circles it might be regarded as very foolish, because in a sense it provides independent corroboration for what is in the Black Books. Therefore, there is every reason why it should be made the property of the Convention. But in that respect has any member of the Ottawa delegation anything to say on whether or not the document referred to should not be made the property of the Convention? Is there any reason why it should not be?

**Mr. Ashbourne** Mr. Chairman, I am very sorry that the chairman of the Ottawa delegation is not

here, Mr. Bradley, because I think that he might have some views on this matter. As far as I am concerned myself I want to see my position clear, to satisfy my own conscience, and to know that I am doing right. If I accepted, when I was a member of the delegation to Ottawa, certain documents which, in the compilation of the Black Books and the Grey Book, were used, and these documents came to me marked "Confidential", and in a folder marked "Secret", the question I must ask myself is whether or not I am permitted to divulge that information without permission from the people who supplied it. I might say I accepted that information as it was handed to me, as confidential and secret ... but I understood that these reports which had been prepared by sub-committees, etc., and supplied to the members, were superseded by these Black Books, and that these were to be the final word, so to speak.

**Mr. Chairman** ... Mr. Smallwood has made the statement that 99.99% of the information contained in the documents, or memoranda to which you refer, is already set forth in the Black Books. Do you agree to that statement?

**Mr. Ashbourne** Well, I would not like to make any statement, but in the main, I don't know mind, but I am afraid that I could not say whether there is very much left out of these Black Books.... Of course, I don't want to withhold anything from the Convention, and if the Canadian government is satisfied to release it, that's up to them.... I understand Mr. Bradley is still ill, but I am sorry he is not here, because, as I said before, I consider that these things were given to us and marked "Secret", and whether or not I am entitled to read from these documents, that is a point that I want to be satisfied on.

**Mr. Chairman** Mr. Burry, would you mind, as a member of the Ottawa delegation, addressing yourself on this very important question, because it is the second time that it has come before the Chair in the past four days and I would like to have it disposed of once and for all, if I could.

**Mr. Burry** Well, Mr. Chairman, I stated my position in this case once. I don't know if I made myself clear or not, but I do not recall giving any undertaking that I would keep any of the documents that I brought back from Ottawa from the Convention. I did not give any undertaking to keep anything secret. While we were there we were given documents that were marked "Con-