

policy of the present British government appears to be in good faith to let those parts of the Empire which wish to assume responsibility, have it. If that is so in respect to peoples who have never even had representative institutions, then it should be doubly so with respect to a country which has had representative institutions for 102 years, and responsible government for 80 years, and which enjoyed dominion status, now in suspension with the Letters Patent. Yet how to do this?

Major Cashin's petition to the contrary notwithstanding,¹ the people of Newfoundland had never directly requested the restoration of the constitution. That does not prove they did not want it; it chiefly means they did not have the leaders. So by means of the National Convention the British government sees to it that they get at least representatives, and possibly leaders as well. Then the British government tells the people of Newfoundland that financially they can expect to be on their own. The mother country cannot help out any further. A report (Chadwick-Jones) is prepared and submitted to the Convention, which amongst other things informs us the country is self-supporting. Commissioner Wild before leaving the country tells the Convention the country is self-supporting. The various reports of the Convention when added up will show the same situation. What then? What else can the Convention do but recommend responsible government? As representatives of the people, they are the people. Again the 1933 agreement is fulfilled. Why then a referendum? Why indeed? Why many things? Why, above all, the introduction of confederation under the rather loose term of federal union? Why the steady flow of propaganda reiterating, insisting that the referendum involve three issues, none of which is representative government? Why should there be two forms of one form of government on a referendum, the second of which, confederation, is in reality an act of union with a larger state, which by its very appearance on a ballot paper presupposes that the people have already signified their desire for self-government? For we cannot be a province of Canada with a commission form of government, nor with a representative form of government. We must have a

responsible form of government before we can enter a confederation or league of self-governing provinces.

Why, indeed? On my interpretation of our terms of reference and the definition of forms of government for the purpose of this National Convention, I will go along with the Convention as set up and with the good faith of the British government. Up to that point, we see fairly well eye to eye. At that point, namely the introduction of what is for the time being an extraneous and confusing issue, my views, and the view of the British government — if that is the view — part company. If, as I and many others in the Convention are being forced to conclude, and many in the country, the National Convention was ostensibly set up to give Newfoundlanders an opportunity to choose between forms of government, as I have set them forth, but in reality to engineer Newfoundland into confederation willy-nilly, without due regard for its effect on the ultimate welfare of our people as a whole, then it's a horse of another colour.... We have seen and heard enough to know that, to paraphrase the poet, "There is something rotten in the state of Newfoundland", and if we strain our ears we can perhaps hear in the distance the jingling of the 30 pieces of silver. So much for the terms of reference and forms of government. I stand by my interpretation, Mr. Chairman, in spite of all that is said at public banquets or by professors of constitutional history in public sessions of this Convention. I am not a lawyer, nor a constitutional historian, but I know people who are, and who agree with me, and we are not ignorant men. In short, if people are told to tell me a certain thing, which they would like me to do, is that any real reason why I should believe them or do it? I don't think so. Furthermore, I do not think I am being discourteous when I say that on such vital and fundamental issues I consider my opinion as good as either yours or Professor Wheare's.

Now I will leave the purely technical aspect of the matter for a moment to consider the more emotional side of this declaration. For obvious reasons, I shall be charged with several so-called crimes — a defender of vested interests and predatory money, which we heard so much about a few weeks ago. To that charge I will only say

¹Early in 1946 Mr. Cashin had circulated a petition demanding that the National Convention be cancelled, and responsible government be immediately restored.