

*Newfoundland*

clearly the sturdy stock from which they sprang, and their determination to see things through. The settlers had to fight repressive laws, and literally they were under a star chamber jurisdiction.

Just before I came into the house I looked up a reference to this repression in our history. In 1633, in the reign of Charles I, the star chamber laid down a number of rules by which the people of Newfoundland were to live, and they were repressive indeed. Then in 1660, in the reign of Charles II, the preamble was altered and confirmed. Let me read you a paragraph from it:

All owners of ships trading to Newfoundland are forbidden to carry any persons not of the ship's company, or such as are to plant or do intend to settle there, and that speedy punishment may be inflicted on offenders.

I can recollect no similar provision touching any other British colony, or indeed any other colony elsewhere.

In 1832, if I may take a jump, representative government was granted by the parliament of the United Kingdom, but it was not responsible government. True, it was representative government, but the governor and the executive were not responsible to the legislature. A few years later there was great friction in the colony, and the British government was asked to intervene. They did so, and the constitution, such as it was, was suspended for a time. It was not until 1855 that the country followed Canada in obtaining responsible government.

I do not propose to traverse the checkered story of the island's political and economic history up to 1931. That was done in part this afternoon by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), and to a certain extent by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew). In 1931, when the loss of markets and world-wide depression brought into bold relief the desperate financial plight of the island and the terrible suffering among its people, something had to be done. In response to appeals from the people of Newfoundland a royal commission was set up under Lord Amulree. I am not going into the details of its report. I am going to say, however, that I have read very carefully the report of that royal commission, which I think was published in 1934, and I was shocked at the conditions which were revealed in it.

As we have heard this afternoon, the result was the suspension of the constitution again, and the setting up of a commission government, which was also described this afternoon. That is where the matter rests today. I agree with the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition that what we are about to consider is an agreement into which Canada is entering, and it is our duty to see to it that that agreement is in the best inter-

ests of Canada. It is none of our business to discuss other matters in relation to it. It is the business of the government of Newfoundland, which at the moment is the government of the United Kingdom, to protect the interests of the people of Newfoundland both in the agreement and in the manner of its making.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I hope and trust that the agreement when consummated will prove mutually satisfactory and advantageous to Canada and Newfoundland. Therefore our first duty is to see that the terms of the agreement we are about to discuss are fair and satisfactory to our own country. As I say, I hope that as time passes both countries will find the agreement satisfactory and mutually advantageous.

I think another matter we have got to be clear about is that we are not taking into confederation the stricken country of 1931. I believe it was the Prime Minister who said this afternoon that a financial surplus has been piled up, and that the country is now relatively prosperous. It has accumulated a substantial surplus. Indeed, the reason why we are discussing this problem at the present time is that it has emerged from the slough of despond which afflicted it in the hungry thirties.

In September, 1944, the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis), the hon. member for Melfort (Mr. Wright), and I attended a conference of the British commonwealth labour, co-operative and socialist parties held in London. We had the opportunity of meeting Lord Ammon and of hearing from him quite a long and interesting report. He had been appointed in 1943 by the coalition government to head a good-will mission to inquire into the situation as it then existed on the island of Newfoundland. The mission visited every part of the island and held discussions with representative people of all types, from the fishing people along the coves and coasts to the people of the towns and in the city of St. John's, on economic conditions, the political future of the island, and all those matters which are very much under discussion today.

Subsequently the Fabian society published a pamphlet much along the lines of the address which Lord Ammon made, and which I, and my hon. friends who attended the conference with me, heard. I want to quote from it a few words which express his appraisal of the people of Newfoundland. He said:

I should record my appreciation of the integrity, shrewdness, and high level of intelligence of the Newfoundlanders. They are, on the whole, a kindly, hospitable people, hardworking yet easy-going, well-mannered but outspoken, thrifty but generous to strangers. Living in close contact with nature, employed for the most part on hard and often dangerous manual work, they have an ingrained healthy contempt of danger; an easy—perhaps too easy—