

And so in 1932, but more so in 1934, two crises of our national life were reached and gone through, and the ignorance and the unconcern of youth thought less of them than of summer holidays in 1932, and a job in 1934. And yet, in looking back, I sometimes wonder if some of the unconcern was more imagined than real; that the sense of destiny may have gone deeper than I thought. Else how, sir, I have often said to myself, "How can you account for this?"

This is a portion of the *Evening Telegram*, for Saturday, February 17, 1934. I am not going to read what's in it, but I want to refer to it for just a moment as I move on to deal with the motion before the Chair. The pages contain a detailed description of the proceedings that went on inside the Newfoundland Hotel on the previous day while I stood outside in the bleak day and wondered. I do not propose to describe that scene, which is so familiar to so many of our people, nor to list the imposing array of very important persons who attended in one capacity or another. But I wish briefly to summarise the meaning of that scene and that event as it then appeared.

The new Letters Patent of 1934 suspended the Letters Patent of 1876 and 1905, and contained in the third paragraph the statement that the new Letters Patent "would provide for the administration of the said Island, until such time, as it may become self-supporting again", and was a natural sequel to the 1933 Act which declared that when the country was self-supporting again and *on request of the people*, responsible government would be restored. On this celebrated occasion Governor Anderson, who opened the proceedings, said in part:

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has treated us *generously*, and has given us the opportunity of bringing back prosperity.<sup>1</sup>

The message from the Dominions Secretary, which the Governor read, said in part:

We recognise the courageous spirit of patriotism with which the former government and legislature and the people of Newfoundland have agreed in the interest of their country's recovery to *accept a suspension of responsible government*; we feel that there could be no better augury for the success of

the new form of constitution. The object of the Letters Patent now proclaimed is to provide for such time as may be necessary to enable it to become self-supporting again. We hope and believe *that the result will be to place its affairs upon so firm and sound a foundation that a recurrence of the present difficulties* will be well-nigh impossible.<sup>2</sup>

Thus spoke the Dominions Secretary. The Hon. F.C. Alderdice, ex-Prime Minister, on that occasion said in part:

In return for the financial assistance extended by the United Kingdom government we agreed to relinquish temporarily the privileges of responsible government, and to place ourselves under the form of regime which has been officially inaugurated here today. Upon this point I will merely say that while our people welcome the inauguration of this *temporary* form of administration, unfettered by extraneous influences, and dedicated solely to the rehabilitation of Newfoundland, at the same time they recognise the necessity of striving earnestly and diligently in extricating the country from its present difficulties and thus hastening the day when we shall be able to lay claim to our *former status*, in the British Commonwealth of Nations.... This form of Commission government will, in my opinion, rapidly and permanently improve conditions in Newfoundland. Freed from the distracting elements of political expediency and party interest, the Commission's energies and activities will be devoted solely to the implementing of a program of expansion of the country's industries, the broader development of its trade and commerce, and the placing of its financial fabric upon a firm and lasting foundation.... The immediate objective must be to rescue the country from the peril of collapse which now threatens to overwhelm it, to instil new heart and confidence in the people and to bring about conditions in which, provided that they play their part, they will be assured at least of earning a livelihood. When the first objective has been achieved, the next objective must be the formation of a long-range plan, based on an

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Harrington's emphases.

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