

departments would then confer with a delegation having full powers to negotiate. In other words, the case for Newfoundland would be carefully prepared and fully understood by those who are to present it, and moreover, the delegation representing Newfoundland should have with them these same departmental heads to advise and assist throughout the negotiations.

I trust my fellow members of the delegation will not take it that I am making any reflection on them when I say that the delegation was not competent to discuss the matters we were discussing. This is not intended to be a reflection on the ability of any one of them, but simply — except possibly in the case of Mr. Smallwood — that none of us had studied the matter before the appointment of the delegation, and we were at a tremendous disadvantage with no technical advice, and lastly, but most important of all, we had no power to negotiate.

I frankly confess that the offer we have received appears to be fair, but I am fully confident that a delegation properly informed, assisted by competent advisers, and with the power to negotiate, would receive a better offer from Canada than we received. I say that with full knowledge of what I am saying. From information I gathered from various sources during our visit to Ottawa, I am certain that the Canadian government would have given us a better offer had the case been properly presented. Again I repeat, with full knowledge of what I am saying, that we can still get a better offer or, if you will, more favourable terms of confederation, if the approach is made by a government elected by and representative of Newfoundland.

I do not want you to understand that our delegation did not do a good job or that we were not given every assistance by the Canadian government. On the contrary, I can assure you that the delegation did a good job and further, that we had every co-operation from the Canadian government. Every possible courtesy was extended to us, from the time of our arrival in Canada until our departure. I have nothing but the greatest of praise and the kindest feelings for all those with whom we came in contact, from the Prime Minister down. The representatives of the Canadian cabinet with whom we held these discussions, were extremely generous of their time and more than considerate in the manner in which

they treated us. These gentlemen are extremely busy, but at all times they endeavoured to meet our ideas with respect to meetings, no matter how inconvenient it was to them. Their advisers, among whom were included the top men of the civil service, were not only very kind, but at all times showed that they were anxious to assist us in every way possible. I gathered from what was said here on their return, that those who visited England did not get such a reception. However, I repeat to those of you who are inclined towards confederation, that the only proper way in fairness to Newfoundland, is that negotiations should be conducted by a Newfoundland government if we are to make the best possible deal for the country.

The facts we have brought back are a very good basis for future negotiations, and there need be no worry in your minds that if the present offer from Canada is not accepted, it will lapse. This was made clear at our last meeting when we were informed that, unless world economic conditions changed, the offer would remain the same if it was not accepted at this time, and negotiations later renewed. Therefore I say, in view of this fact, should we not first elect a government to finalise any such deal? If nothing else but from sentiment, if we are going to confederate, let us do it in the proper way. Let us go in the front door and not the back door! Let us, as befitting the dignity of this country of ours which is 450 years old, consummate union in a manner that befits such an important decision.

[Short recess]

Mr. Higgins Just before that recess, I was commenting on the fact that the report brought back by the delegation and embodied in the Black Books and the Grey Book, was in my opinion a good basis for future negotiation. That is as far as this country can go at the present time — it is a good basis for future negotiations between countries.

However, to return to the argument. It is easy to understand the reason for Canada wishing to acquire Newfoundland. To begin with, Canada is, I believe, the third largest country in area in the world, but she only has a population of some 12 millions. She needs immigrants to develop her own country and is at present engaged in bringing them in by the thousands. She has tremendous areas of territory, good rich land at present lying