
Monday, November 27, 1933

His Excellency the Governor, having fixed the hour at which he proposed to open the Legislature at three o'clock in the afternoon of this Monday, the twenty seventh day of November instant, the Members of the House of Assembly met in the Assembly Rooms at a quarter to three in the afternoon, when Mr. Speaker took the Chair.

At three of the clock a message from His Excellency the Governor was delivered by the Gentlemen Usher of the Black Rod, commanding the immediate attendance of Mr. Speaker and the House in the Legislative Council Chamber.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker and the House attended His Excellency in the Council Chamber, and being returned to the Assembly Room, Mr. Speaker informed the House that, when in attendance upon His Excellency the Governor in the Council Chamber, His Excellency had been pleased to make a Gracious Speech to both Branches of the Legislature, a copy of which, for greater accuracy, he had obtained, and then read to the House as follows:

Mr. President and the Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

The report of the Royal Commission appointed to examine into the future of Newfoundland was received and published last week, and you have been summoned, on the advice of my Ministers, to give immediate consideration to its recommendations.

With the Report was published an exchange of telegrams with the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, in which it was intimated by the Secretary of State that, if the main recommendations of the Commission should be accepted by the Government and Legislature of Newfoundland, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would for their part be prepared to accept them and to invite the United Kingdom Parliament to pass the legislation necessary to give them effect. The Secretary of State also gave details of the action, which the Government of the United Kingdom, subject to the approval of Parliament, would in that event be prepared to take with a view to ensuring to Newfoundland, in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission, a reduction in the present burden of the public debt.

I need not enter here into the circumstances in which the Royal Commission was appointed. It will suffice for me to say that during the last two years, it has become increasingly apparent that the Dominion is unable, from its own resources, to meet the interest charges on the public debt. Urgent action is therefore required if the Island is to be saved from default, a fate which was averted in December 1932 and June 1933 only by the generous assistance of the United Kingdom and Canada.

The Royal Commission, after impartial and extensive investigation, have declared that the needs of the Dominion are two-fold, financial and political, and in these circumstances they have recommended that an immediate appeal should be made to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for their sympathetic cooperation in a joint plan of reconstruction. The telegram received from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs indicated that such an appeal, if made, would be

assured of a prompt, favourable, and indeed generous response.

It is in the belief that the recommendations of the Royal Commission afford the people of Newfoundland not merely the prospect of relief from immediate financial anxiety but an adequate means of freeing themselves from the unprecedented difficulties against which they are now so bravely struggling, that my Ministers will lay before you proposals for giving them immediate effect.

I leave you now to your deliberations with full confidence that they will be inspired by a common desire to seek only the best interests of the country and the welfare of its suffering people.

I pray that Divine Providence will guide and bless your work.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the table of the House two copies of the Newfoundland Royal Commission Report, 1933, with two copies of the White Paper indicating the attitude of His Majesty's Government in relation thereto.

It was moved by Mr. Gray, and seconded by Mr. Whiteley, that an Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Gracious Speech with which he had been pleased to open the present Session of the Legislature, and that a Select Committee be appointed to draft such Address in reply.

It was ordered accordingly, and that the following gentlemen be such Committee: Mr. Gray, Mr. Whiteley, Mr. Abbott, Dr. Mosdell, Mr. Bradley.

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker: I rise for the purpose of moving that a Select Committee be appointed to draft a reply to the gracious speech with which His Excellency has been pleased to open this session of the Legislature, and I ask the permission of this House to make a few observations on the one subject with which we are asked to deal – the immediate consideration of the recommendation of His Majesty's Royal Commission. I deeply regret the conditions which have brought about this crisis. These you will find in the report of the Royal Commission. That report has been read by all the Members of this House, and by a large number of the citizens. I would [hope] that, if it be possible, it would be read by everyone in the country, so that present and future generations may profit by its findings and by the facts therein, and avoid such errors in the future.

The crisis started in 1931, when we found that we were unable to go into the market and borrow money as in previous years. Our credit was gone, and we had evidently reached the limit of borrowing. The government of that day, finding it impossible to obtain funds, or to obtain a sale of our bonds in the market, succeeded in raising the funds from the Canadian banks in the city, and also from the loan secured by giving a monopoly to the Imperial Oil Company. This money did not cover the deficits, and with a falling revenue our position was very unsatisfactory and very unsafe.

In 1932 when the present Government came into office, we found it impossible to conduct the affairs of the country, the business of the country, without immediately reducing the expenditure of public moneys in all Departments of the Government. We had to reduce the salaries of the civil servants; the votes for education; for war veterans' pensions; public charities; health and hospital grants. With all these drastic economies we found that we were still unable to fulfill our obligations, and we could see no other course than default, and, Mr. Speaker, I feel sure that the effects of that action on our part would have had terrible effects on our people. It would be the worst disaster that

could befall us. We decided to ask His Majesty's Government for a Royal Commission to further investigate our affairs and to make such recommendations as they would consider necessary in the circumstances. Those recommendations, and the suggestions by His Majesty's commissioners, we are asked to consider. They call for our serious attention, as on them depend the future well-being of our country and our people. The relief of a reduction in the public debt and a reconstruction loan, the assurance of being safe from default, will relieve us of great anxiety. The matters referred to in the report, and the interest of His Majesty's Government in the development of our resources, the re-establishment of our finances, all of which are necessary for our future security, are dealt with in that report.

Those recommendations, while they contain the proposals for our financial benefit, also require that we agree to certain changes in our constitution. These are made necessary because of the wishes of His Majesty's Government by their active participation in the affairs of our country. They are, in fact, to become our partners, and it is only right and proper that their interests should be safeguarded. No person, whether in private or business life is prepared to assume obligations without having a voice in the undertaking.

We have, as I said, reached a crisis in our history – the parting of the ways. It will be a red-letter day in Newfoundland.

In our deliberation on [the] special subject of legislation, let us be guided by the one thought – our country and our people.

We are sincerely thankful to the Mother Country for the keen interest she has taken in our welfare – for the inspiration and hope she offers us. The fear that has greatly hampered all our undertakings can be removed, and the stability and confidence so absolutely necessary to our economic existence is assured.

Capt. Whiteley: I do not for a moment underestimate the dignity of a responsible government, that our forefathers have won us. But if we will have lost that boon for a period, perhaps it is through no fault but our own.

I have studied the report, and if there is one thing that stands out clearly, it is the earnest desire on the part of the Commissioners to render assistance to the fisherfolk of this land. As I am the only representative of this house who is a fisherman, actively engaged, I feel I am not speaking for myself, but for the thousands of my fellow shipmates in this Island. I have spoken [to] and had word from many of them, and without exception they are unanimously in favour of the report being speedily adopted.

As for the District of St. Barbe, which I have the honour to represent, I am sure they will endorse what the government is about to do.

Unhappily the fishermen of Newfoundland are in a state of distress. We all know what effect distress produces on people, how it makes even wise men irritable, credulous, and eager for immediate relief, regardless of remote consequences, and therefore it is no reflection on the fishermen of this country who are not, and cannot in the nature of things be highly educated, to say that distress inflames their passions, warps their judgment, and makes them prone to believe those who flatter them, and to disbelieve and view with suspicion and distrust, those who endeavour to serve them.

My first introduction to politics was as a lad in the election of 1898. Since then I have kept a close watch on political events. During the later years the members of the different governments were known to me, several members of the Executive Government were my personal friends. But I have no hesitation in saying that the decline in our administrative personnel followed after that unfortunate episode during which Sir Robert Bond was pushed over the wharf at Western Bay.¹⁴⁹ Following that occasion, the tone of our political life was distinctly lowered. Men of capacity were not encouraged to take up the public service. Their places were filled by others less capable, nay, incapable of wise administration, the proof of this that we are here to-day.

The report has been criticized for its frankness. But for anyone acquainted with the public life of this country for the past twenty years, the facts were well known.

But let us not think for a moment that our work is done when the commission is appointed. There will be much to be done, and only we ourselves can do it. Let us see to it that community spirit is awakened and fostered by speech and act, and at the end of a few years we will have men suitable to take their places in the public life of their country. I have no fears for Newfoundland, all she wants is a chance to set her house in order, work up the natural resources, and for the burden upon her to be lightened. If at the end of a short period we wish to have Responsible Government back, I feel sure that our young people will have a change for the better.

The question has been asked, "Why is England so generous to us?" In reply I would say, the British nation may forget an injury, but they never forget to lend a helping hand in the hour of need. Newfoundland during the war, extended that helping hand to the Mother Country, to what extent can never be fully estimated. I have in mind my next-door neighbour – three sons from one home – who can estimate that family's sacrifice? That is only one of the hundreds on this Island, and to-day the Motherland remembers.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, to offer my congratulations to the Prime Minister. The ship of state has been labouring in heavy weather since he took charge. But the man at the wheel has been cool and collected, and although at times we have been perilously near the rocks, he has guided her safely through thus far. As one of the ordinary seamen, I salute him as a wise and capable captain.

At the close of the present session, I, with others in the chamber, will pass the Sergeant at Arms for the last time. But I feel we got out with a clean record. We have nothing to conceal, nothing to hide, nothing to cover up. All is straight and above board.

The last paragraph of His Excellency's speech prays that Divine providence will aid and bless our work. Mr. Speaker, I have a sailor's horror of cant in any form, but I also have a fisherman's faith. I believe more things are wrought by earnest prayer than this world dreams of. I say it is not only the noble Admiral's prayer we need, but the prayer of every bishop, parson, and priest in this land ought to go up for us, that we may have knowledge, wisdom, and understand, in this hour and as we pass out I can still say and mean every word:

“When blinding snow-drifts fret thy shore,
And wild waves dash thy strand,
Through spindrift swirl, and tempest roar

¹⁴⁹ This incident occurred during the 1909 general election campaign.

We love thee Newfoundland

As loved our fathers, so we love
Where once they stood, we stand
This prayer we raise to Heaven Above
God guard thee Newfoundland"

So, Mr. Speaker, without further speech, I beg to second the motion by the Hon. Member for Twillingate, that a select committee be named to draft an address in reply to His Excellency's most gracious speech. [*Daily News*, November 28, 1933]

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, that this is probably the most solemn occasion upon which this House has been called together within the last one hundred years must be apparent to everybody within the sound of my voice. It is not an occasion when one ought to indulge in eloquence or oratory; it is not an occasion when I, from my position here as Leader of the Opposition, should make any attempt to attack the meticulous inaccuracies which may have characterized some portions of the speeches of the two gentlemen who moved and seconded the Address in Reply. It is not an occasion upon which I should attack the Government as to their misdeeds since the Legislature last closed. But it is one upon which the most careful and deliberate and painstaking examination should be given to the proposals foreshadowed in the Speech from the Throne which opened in the Legislature this afternoon.

According to the Speech from the Throne, coupled with the Royal Commission's Report and the White Paper which accompanies it, it is abundantly clear that the goal aimed at, among other things, is the deprivation of this country of its right of self-government. That is something which has never happened in this House before. It is probably the greatest right humanly possible for this or any country to have, that of [the] ordering of its own destinies.

If in the opinion of this House and the Legislative Council, the British House of Commons and the House of Lords, these proposals ought to go into effect, then Newfoundlanders are no longer citizens as the word citizen is understood under the British flag.

I state this as a fact, and not to arouse any sentiment in anybody this afternoon. It is for that reason that we should realize the solemnity of the occasion, and the tremendous importance of the decision we have to make. And I feel confident that every Member of this House realizes now, or will realise before this Session is over, that the burden and responsibility that will be cast upon him is such as was never cast upon legislators or a legislature in the history of Newfoundland since 1832.¹⁵⁰

At times, Sir, at times since I have first read the report of the Royal Commission and the White Paper which accompanies it, I have wished that I did not occupy a seat in this House, because upon my attitude or those of any individual Member of this Assembly may depend the destinies of 280,000 people.

¹⁵⁰ Newfoundland received representative government in 1832.

It is not my intention this afternoon to deal at all with the merits of the Report, or of the proposals based upon it. My only intention is to draw to the attention of every Member of this House and of the public generally, the utter importance of the situation which has arisen, the utter importance of the decision we will have to make, and the tremendous import to the people which their decisions will involve. I take it that in some form or another resolutions will be introduced by the Honourable Prime Minister on to-morrow, in the official parlance of the House, whenever to-morrow may be; and in this connection I may say that the Prime Minister has been good enough to put me in possession of a copy of these proposals, but I can't mention them here now.

I merely indicate the difficulties that we have to meet. I do not intend to run into a discussion attacking or defending the Report or the White Paper or the proposals forecast therein. I hope due care and consideration has been given to this matter by the Government. I trust sufficient time for every Member of this House, and in so far as possible every citizen of Newfoundland who has sufficient intelligence to understand them, may be given, to assimilate the contents of this Report, and to weigh the various portions of it and the effect its proposals may have, and to form some sane, sound idea as to the ultimate consequences they may have on our people.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, I desire to congratulate my colleagues the Hon. Member for Twillingate and the Hon. Member for Bonne Bay on the very excellent speeches which they have made. It is not an easy task to speak to the present speech from the Throne. As the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has just said, this is a very solemn occasion. Every one of us on both sides of the House find our feelings pinched with sadness and responsibility.

We have given the question very earnest thought, and I am sure that the honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House will give it the same amount of thought. It is not what we are giving up. We know what we give up; but when we have to choose between self-government on the one hand, and a release from the financial abyss into which we are plunged on the other, who would for a moment hesitate in his choice? When we have a chance laid open to us to maintain our people in comfort, to release them from the state of semi-starvation which is their lot to-day, would we not give up almost anything? Then again, we are not giving up responsible government for all time. Indeed, the spirit of the resolution which will be introduced to-morrow is simply asking His Majesty's Government in Great Britain to take over our system of responsible government for safekeeping until we are better able to take care of it ourselves. It may not be many years, it may only be three years – because this country of ours is a wonderful country for coming back – when we will be self-governing again. It may be five years, or it may be longer. When speaking to my own party the other night, I said that some of the younger men will be in politics again, and that I hoped that when they did go to the country in a few years time, they will give the same assistance as members then, as they gave me during the time they served under me. I don't despair for one moment for the future of this country.

It is often asked, in fact my colleague asked the question to-day, "Why is England so generous?" I have one reason. I remember when I was in Ottawa last year, I was discussing with Mr. Thomas the wonderful sacrifices being made by our people in Newfoundland. Our people had a cut in the civil service which was tremendous. Pensioners were taking a cut of 45 per cent. I told him of soldiers' widows sending in, out of their meagre pensions, one dollar per month. I told him of cases

where Customs officials had to be pensioned, in which cases we had told them that we couldn't afford to keep their offices open, and that we had to pension them. But they wrote back and said, "Never mind, we'll work for the pension." I was talking in the same strain with Mr. Baldwin, and he said, "My God, your people are heroic." That is one reason why England is so generous to us.

Now, it may seem to some that our willingness to give up responsible government is a confession of failure. I don't say it is that, but I am afraid we are self-confessed as being unable to govern ourselves soundly and economically, and I think that if we had a holiday for a few years – time to get above the welter of party politics for a few years – when we get back responsible government in a few years, I believe we will act very differently in the future. I am not going to delay the House further. We will take this up in detail to-morrow.

I will depend on the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to give the matter proper care and impartial consideration. He is well able to do so, for at the last Session of the House he demonstrated his ability, and before this Session is over, I am going to move a vote of thanks to him for his assistance. I appeal to him to assist in the present Session in the consideration of this weighty question.

During this Session we will deliberate on the proposals alone. No other legislation will be introduced beyond that which is connected with the Report of the Royal Commission and the White Paper which accompanies it. I do not want to becloud the issue, and I feel that as all here present are Newfoundlanders by birth or adoption, all will be animated with the one idea of arriving at a conclusion best for Newfoundland in the years to come.

Hon. the Prime Minister gave notice that he would on to-morrow move that a humble Address be presented to His Majesty the King in reference to the constitutional and financial condition of the country at the present time and proposed measures to deal with the same.

Hon. the Prime Minister gave notice that he would on to-morrow move the House into a Committee of the Whole to consider certain Resolutions to provide for the issue of certain securities on the credit of the Dominion, for the postponement of certain securities of the Dominion and for the giving of priority to certain other securities thereof.

Mr. Speaker presented and read the following correspondence from His Excellency the Governor:

The Governor has the honour to communicate to the Honourable House of Assembly the appointment of the Commissioners of Internal Economy of the Legislature in accordance with the provisions of Section 4, Cap. 7, Consolidated Statutes (Third Series) as set forth in the accompanying certified copy of a Minute of the Honourable Executive Council approved on the 22nd November, 1933.¹⁵¹

(Sgd.)

D. Murray Anderson, Admiral, Governor.

¹⁵¹ The committee members were the President of the Legislative Council, F. McNamara, the Speaker and Sir John Bennett.

Government House, 24 November, 1933.

On the motion that when the House rises it adjourn until to-morrow, Tuesday, afternoon at three of the clock, Mr. Bradley moved and Mr. Starkes seconded, in amendment, that adjournment be taken until Monday next, December 4th.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, as I said before this afternoon, this country has had responsible government for 100 years, and during that time many questions concerning the welfare of the people have come before this Assembly. The question [that] is now before us transcends them all in importance as to the welfare of the people. It is a tremendous question. It is an awe-inspiring question. It is oppressive and almost crushing in its proportions. It does not concern merely the future of the country, but the very future of the people. The life of the people depends on our deliberations during this Session. It is a question which demands the most careful, painstaking, deliberately exhaustive examination and analysis before coming to any decision, and before casting any die. All the activities of the people are involved, and their many and varied interests are entitled to the most careful and deliberate consideration. The constitutional life, the economic life, the educational life, the social and sociological, even the religious life of the people are basically involved.

This is a Report of countless facts and statistics, elaborate reasoning and argument, and a number of theories and alternate proposals are contained in its 280 pages. This should not cause surprise, because it is the work of many months. The Commission did not investigate one phase of any industry and activity of a people [but] an entire country, a country dissimilar to any other country in the world from the standpoint of history and social and economic problems. The ultimate conclusions of thoughtful men may coincide with the views of the Commission. It is impossible to foretell now. It seems to me that close study and mature thought must be given to these conclusions and revolutionary proposals, before the soundest thinker can form an opinion of any value. There may be revealed flaws not apparent in the first flush of enthusiasm on the publication of the Report. The proposals are before us, and the next step is ours. Whether we accept them or reject them, or look for modification, our decision is irrevocable and binds a whole people.

I have said that the Report contains countless facts and statistics, and the information gathered shows an immense capacity for intense work. The very fact of strangers coming in here making an investigation, made it impossible for them to feel to any degree any true intimacy with the breathing background of the country, or the normal mentalities of the people. It was quite impossible for them to get inside the skins of the great mass of the individuals, and I seriously doubt that they penetrated the company manners of witnesses. They could not look through the keyhole and see what was going on behind the door. They had to depend on the reactions of a man who was, in the popular parlance, "on his toes." Here is the great weakness of the Report itself. They could not become thoroughly familiar with the human element, and that is the essence of the whole problem. If this were a problem in mathematics or logic, this objection would not arise. This is a problem in humanity, and there is nothing in the Report to show anything of the possible reaction to changed conditions, and in the last analysis its success hangs on that question. These are the considerations which the Commission did not appreciate, and in the course of their short stay their opportunities

greatly lessened. These are the considerations which we cannot ignore. We are the representatives of a people, and it is the effects on that people that we have to consider first. There have been many questions decided on the floors of this House, and none have passed without ample opportunity for discussion, and I think that ample opportunity should be given by the Prime Minister and his associates on this occasion.

But it must be remembered that the more important of the matters which have been debated and decided here in the past were not decided before we had in some form or another a mandate from the people of this country. And this particular question with which we are faced this afternoon is positively and undoubtedly and unquestionably the most important question that has ever come before the House. Not to my knowledge have there ever been any proposals placed before this Legislature involving such terrific reaction in this country and its people as the proposals which we are asked to consider at this Session of the House, and we have no mandate from the people. Now this country is the people's yet, and they have under our constitution and under natural law, a right to a say in their own destiny. We are what is commonly called a sovereign people, and, Sir, their sovereign rights have not as yet passed from them. These rights are still as yesterday, as twenty years ago, and we, in this House, in the common hackneyed phrase, are but the trustees of the people.

Each Member of this House was sent here with a definite mandate. He appeared before his constituents at an election and he took a certain platform for his political guide, and it was upon the basis of that, that he was sent to this House. The mandate received by us at the last general election did not include [*omission*]; it did not even envisage the adoption of proposals such as these – the adoption of a proposal that their right to withhold or to give a mandate should be taken from them, without their consent. If there is no time offered the people; if this matter is carried through this Assembly and the Legislative Council this week, to-morrow, there are thousands of people who will know that this matter has been finally decided, before they knew what the matter is. It is not the sort of thing, Sir, that anybody in any of our outports or in St. John's can form any opinion of value upon from the mere telegraphic message which they have received through the public messages. So far as the newspapers are concerned, comparatively few go outside the City of St. John's. I have in mind one outport at the present time with a population of over 3,000 people, and I don't want to exaggerate, but I am quite sure that in that 3,000 people we won't find 50 papers hardly, particularly under existing economic conditions when the \$6 a year which, I understand, is the subscription to our two most important dailies, is utterly beyond the reach of most of our people.

Therefore, Sir, I say, and I say with complete lack of fear of successful contradiction, that the majority of people in Newfoundland at this hour of this day have no real conception whatever of what is involved in these proposals. Yet we know to some extent, at any rate, the import and the nature of what is proposed we should do here. We know that it involves the life and interests of every man, woman, and child in Newfoundland. We know that it involves the giving up of that right of citizenship which is prized by no other race under the sun so much as it is by the British race. We know that it is proposed that the status of citizen should be taken from these people. They never dreamed that we intended to do anything of this kind, never dreamed of it when they sent us here as their servants to do their work, and we propose now to take their rights from them without their consent because – I assume this, Sir, in fairness – because a majority of us think it ought to be done. What right have we to set out our few opinions in this Assembly up against the opinions of the great

body of the citizens of this country, when what we propose to do concerns their rights? They have a right to them. They have a right to consider them. They have a right to communicate with us, they have a right to say themselves whether they do or do not want this thing, and the position to-day is, as I say, very few of them know anything about it, much less have they formed an opinion as to whether it ought to be done or not.

Now, I have here a number of documents. I do not propose to read them. I have here a resolution from a very important organization. They have not given me permission to use their name, and I shall not do so.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: That is unfortunate.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Yes, but I want to be fair, and I want to say that the executive body, the Grand Lodge, if you like of that organization has received messages from numbers of its branches - messages for which they asked, messages in answer to a request for an opinion, and in the majority of cases the reply is favourable to the introduction of this system of commission government. Indeed, one comes from my own District. That is the view of some who have apparently got some information about it, but I doubt very much, in fact, I am morally certain, that very few of the men who agreed to the various resolutions in the different branches supporting this idea of commission government have yet any real conception of what is meant by it. On the other hand - let me say, Mr. Speaker, that none of these messages were solicited by me, I had no idea they were coming - on the other hand, I have a message from what at least might be regarded as a patriotic body, and that is the Newfoundland Association of Toronto. This message was sent me as Leader of the Opposition and it reads as follows:

“The Newfoundland Association of Toronto protest as arbitrary a suspension ... without the approval of the electors, won with great effort ... in the Great War. Their suspension would reduce her status in the Empire and humiliate her people everywhere. The appointment of a Commission should be with the consent of the electors; otherwise it will permanently deprive them of any voice in her public affairs.

Signed:

Executive Committee of the Newfoundland Association of Toronto
S. A. Brett
Secretary.”

That message came yesterday morning. This afternoon, while I was sitting in this House, the following message was handed me from the same body:

“Please advise editors NEWS and TELEGRAM contents our night letter of 25th.”

That is also signed by the Newfoundland Association of Toronto, S. A. Brett, Secretary. I don't know Mr. Brett; I am not in a position to say that I know a single member of the Newfoundland Association of Toronto, but I say that this, that that may be taken as some index of

the manner in which these proposals are viewed by Newfoundlanders who are some distance from their native land, and who perhaps can form a more sound view of the situation because they see it in better perspective. You can't see a forest by getting up close to the trees, and if this Royal Commission Report is not a forest of facts, a forest of proposals, I do not know what it is. These are men who have the interest of their country at heart. I believe that there is no reason why they should send me a message of this kind unless they were interested on behalf of Newfoundland. They do not live in Newfoundland to-day. They are under the Canadian flag, [and] there is no suggestion that the Dominion of Canada is about to be reduced from her Dominion status, there is no suggestion that her people are to be deprived of any voice in her affairs. But as patriotic Newfoundlanders now living under the flag of the Dominion of Canada with all the rights of British citizens there, these men are sufficiently interested in the land of their birth as to send a message of this character, pointing out that this involves the life of the people; that the people are a sovereign people; that they have a right to a voice in their own destiny, and that this should be referred to the electorate.

Now, any undue haste in forcing this measure through this House would be a dereliction of duty on our part. It may as well be that this is the last duty that we shall perform as legislators towards those whom we represent. Let us at least do that, let us at least give some opportunity for consideration so that unfair, Sir, haste, un-British haste, unprecedented haste, fantastic ... if I thought that the request which I am about to make, or the amendment which I am about to propose were unreasonable and improper, I would not make it, but I am convinced as I stand here this afternoon, not only as a Member of this House but as a Newfoundlander, I am convinced that further time will be given for the consideration of this matter before we railroad the thing through the House of Assembly. Some people have been kind enough to credit me with a fairly alert mind. Well, I admit quite frankly that I have not yet been able in the short space of time at my disposal to examine into this document and to picture the condition which the adoption of the proposals will bring about in this country, whether it is for one year, two years, or five years hence. It is for that reason that I offer a most reasonable amendment, namely, that the motion, presumably of the Prime Minister, that we adjourn until to-morrow, November 28th, be amended by substituting therefor the words December 4th, within which time to consider this matter before we debate it upon the floors of this House; and not only that we might have more time, but that the people of Newfoundland, who are more important than we are, be given time to consider the proposals and, at least be given the opportunity of communicating their views to us.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, if I felt that any good would be gained by an extended postponement or adjournment of this House, I would be only too glad to accede to it. Has the Hon. Member any suggestion to offer that would tend to maintain our integrity, and bring prosperity to all the people of Newfoundland, and whereby we would still be able to hold up our heads as an independent unit of the Empire? Or has he anything to offer to keep us solvent? I am afraid he has not, and for that reason I cannot accept his amendment.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I do not quite know what is meant by asking me if I have any suggestion to offer which might maintain the integrity of this Dominion, and yet avoid the necessity of putting those proposals through. I might say I have certain suggestions to offer, and

suggestions of an important character to make, when we come to the proposals. That I cannot deal with now. But I feel that in connection with that particular point, it is of secondary importance at the moment. There is no real necessity to proceed to-morrow upon the proposals as they are, and perhaps I shall have to go a little further and explain what I mean. Anyone who has read the proposals carefully is aware that the British Government lays down as a condition that we should agree in the main with the proposals. Knowing the British Government as we do, knowing their willingness to see the other fellow's side of the question, and knowing that they are always prepared to consider the views of the other side, I am of the opinion that that particular financial section of the proposals can be interpreted in this way: that provided that necessary financial safeguards are implemented – and these will include also political safeguards – the British Government will consider a recession from the absolute terms as they appear in the White Paper. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have certain suggestions I want to propose and I want a little time to consider them, and I want the people of this country to know more than they do now about the proposals. Thus far I have seen in the proposals certain sections that can be amended, and that the British Government, the British House of Lords and the British House of Commons will assent to and be glad to amend – because they are British. It is for that reason that I make the amendment this afternoon. I know that these resolutions are going through this House in this or some form, and I have no political axe to grind. It is humanly probable that I, in common with the smaller despised class, will have our axes taken from us shortly. Consequently, I am not actuated by any political motives in my utterances here to-day. All I want is British fair play in justice to the people whom I belong to, whom I have the privilege to represent in this House and whom I speak for this afternoon.

Whereupon the House divided and there appeared in favour of the amendment: Mr. Bradley; Mr. Starkes.

And against it: Hon. F. C. Alderdice; Hon. L. E. Emerson; Hon. J. C. Puddester; Hon. W. Winsor; Hon. John Stone; Hon. Harold Mitchell; Hon. W. J. Browne; Hon. S. J. Foote; Hon. W. J. Walsh; Hon. K. M. Brown; Hon. M. A. Shea; Mr. Harold Earle; Mr. H. W. Quinton; Mr. P. J. Lewis; Mr. E. Gear; Mr. Norman Gray; Mr. Chas Furey; Mr. Jos. Moore; Mr. W. H. Abbott; Mr. Geo. Whiteley; Dr. Mosdell.

So it passed in the negative.

The original motion to adjourn until to-morrow was then put and there appeared in its favour: Hon. F. C. Alderdice; Hon. L. E. Emerson; Hon. J. C. Puddester; Hon. W. Winsor; Hon. John Stone; Hon. Harold Mitchell; Hon. W. J. Browne; Hon. S. J. Foote; Hon. W. J. Walsh; Hon. K. M. Brown; Hon. M. A. Shea; Mr. Harold Earle; Mr. H. W. Quinton; Mr. P. J. Lewis; Mr. E. Gear; Mr. Norman Gray; Mr. Chas Furey; Mr. Jos. Moore; Mr. W. H. Abbott; Mr. Geo. Whiteley; Dr. Mosdell.

And against it: Mr. Bradley; Mr. Starkes.

So it passed in the affirmative and was ordered accordingly.

On motion the House then adjourned until to-morrow afternoon, Tuesday, the twenty-eighth of November instant, at three of the clock

Tuesday, November 28, 1933

The House met at three of the clock in the afternoon, pursuant to adjournment.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister to move that a humble Address be presented to His Majesty the King in reference to the constitutional and financial condition of this country.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In my experience in this House it has been usual for Resolutions to be introduced through Committee. That was the procedure followed in connection with the resolution for an Address to His Majesty in connection with Dominion Status two years ago. Proceedings in Committee usually give more latitude in debate, and in a case of this kind we should have the utmost latitude permissible. The resolution is [*omission*] and refers to a document alleged to be annexed thereto. In the copy which I have there are no documents annexed. Surely this document should be discussed freely and in some detail, in view of the variety of recommendations contained therein, and in view of the fact that this is clearly contemplated in the White Paper itself containing these proposals, that there is no intimation by the British Government that the proposals should be accepted in toto.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: I think the honourable gentleman is wrong there. If he will read the White Paper, he will see that he is in error.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: I am not in error. In the explanatory memoranda to His Excellency the Governor, received on the 19th of November 1933, this statement is made: (*reads*). That clearly indicates that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain does not intend to force these proposals upon the people of Newfoundland without at least some discussion. I don't propose to elaborate this point here and now. I would not be prepared to do so. I might indicate to this House how absurd our position will be if we accept *in toto* these proposals. The British people and the civilized world will laugh at us.

Proceedings of this kind should be thrown into Committee for discussion, and the reason behind that rule is that discussion in Committee is much freer, and more latitude is offered to the members of this House, and when did this House ever require more latitude, more freedom of debate than it does upon the question which the Prime Minister lays before us? I ask your ruling on this point, and I pray that you consider my position.

Hon. the Speaker: The question which the Hon. Member raises is an important one, and one to which I have, I may say, been giving considerable consideration since notice was given by the Prime Minister yesterday. It is quite true, as the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has stated, that the resolutions for the Address in connection with the Statute of Westminster were considered by this House in Committee. Whether or not that is the proper procedure, I am not at the present time prepared to state. It is true also that in the proceeding just referred to, which took [place] in this House, the question was not raised as to whether it was proper to have the discussion in Committee.

The Notice is to move that an Address be presented to His Majesty. In that Address, I don't

see any difference from any other Address to His Majesty, such as an Address in Reply; the only analogy we have [comes] from common experience in this House. I cannot find anything laid down formerly to say that an Address to the King must be introduced in the form of proposals to be laid before the Committee of the Whole.

I agree with the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that in this matter an opportunity should be given for the freest and the most unrestricted discussion by every Member of this House, and that time should be afforded for discussion; but I don't agree with him that the proper procedure is to go into a Committee of the Whole House on an Address of this kind.

Hon. Minister of Justice: Mr. Speaker, it has just occurred to me in the course of Your Honour's remarks that we have another precedent of an Address to His Excellency the Governor, proposed in 1932 by the Hon. Prime Minister of the day. We did not then go into Committee; that Address was seconded by my honourable and learned friend, the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, may I again interject. While I appreciate the cogency of Your Honour's reasoning, I have to point out a distinction between this particular Address, and the one which the Hon. the Minister of Justice has brought forward as a precedent in support of his argument. This particular Resolution is of much more importance, and is one of only two in my recollection which were ever addressed directly to the King. The one which the Hon. Minister of Justice refers to was addressed to His Excellency the Governor. Whether it is a constitutional right under Parliamentary procedure to demand it, is not to the point. There is no question as to the difficulty of the matter which is has been raised for decision. This question as to the proprieties, in view of the importance of the subject here for consideration, and as to the rules of Parliamentary procedure, ought not to bear so much weight.

I think it proper that the House should consider the matter in Committee and for that reason I appeal to the Prime Minister.

This is the last occasion probably on which we will have the honour – I will call it that because it is, although many don't seem to consider it so to-day – of representing the people. Therefore let us have a full discussion of anything about to take away our Parliamentary rights.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that I am the very last person in the world to attempt to muzzle or silence debate, or the free criticism of this House. But after all, there is a limit to the time at our disposal. If the honourable gentlemen could give me some undertaking that he won't unnecessarily delay the proceedings, I am quite prepared to accept that.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I am but one man and my colleague is another, and we have physical human limitations. It is utterly impossible for us to impede the progress of this Bill. While I do consider that any effort on the part of the Government to close this matter without due discussion is improper, yet at the same time I will give the Prime Minister an assurance from my own personal physical limitations that I will not unduly obstruct its passage. I am not able to do it. Probably if this matter goes into Committee it will not take twenty minutes longer than if the Resolutions go before the House, but I want every freedom of debate while the matter is before the

House.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that you will give the honourable gentlemen every consideration, that you will not be too strict in applying the Rules, and that Your Honour will give him every opportunity to debate the subject. But there is a limit to this. We can't keep on this matter for all time, and I know that when it goes into Committee it will not be unduly prolonged.

I am not as well versed in Parliamentary procedure as my honourable friend, and I put myself in the hands of the Speaker as to the proper procedure to take. The primary intention was to have it before the House, but now it is intended to move the House into a Committee of the Whole to consider it.

Hon. the Speaker: That can be done at any time. If a motion is made to place the Resolutions before the House, and an amendment is made to go into Committee of the Whole and the House accepts such amendment, it can go into Committee of the Whole on the amendment being adopted. It would be a great pity if these things should be undertaken with any spirit of animosity over questions of procedure. I cannot find any precedent for the procedure adopted two years ago for the Statute of Westminster. If it is the wish of the House to go into Committee on this matter, it can be done.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, that would be going against your own ruling and I ask that we carry on as we first intended, and that Your Honour give the Hon. Leader of the Opposition every latitude, every opportunity for debate.

Hon. the Speaker: I take it that in that case, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition would be allowed to speak only once.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would be allowed to speak only once and to make only one motion. It is not my intention to occupy the time of the House more than twenty minutes more at the outside if we go into Committee, than if we proceed as it is now urged.

The House may at any time suspend any Rule and take any course it wishes to adopt. We did it a thousand times a day last Session. It is a standing Rule of this House that a measure must not be introduced without notice being given of it and it cannot be introduced until the next day; then it is read the second time and it cannot be read the third time until the next day. It cannot be read the third time until the next day. We have put Bills into effect in this House of Assembly within ten minutes from the time on which they were first mentioned by the Prime Minister.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition understands my position. Time does not wait for any man, not even for us, and if the Hon. Leader of the Opposition will give us an undertaking we can put this through this evening, I shall be quite satisfied.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker I don't think there is any doubt about it as far as we are concerned. I can't answer for men on the other side of the House.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering its Address to His Majesty.

Pursuant to notice, with unanimous consent, and on motion of Hon. the Prime Minister, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider certain Resolutions respecting the Presentation of a Humble Address to His Majesty the King in reference to the constitutional and financial condition of this country at the present time, and proposed measures to deal with the same.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. Shea took the Chair of Committee.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: I beg to move that an Humble Address be presented to his Majesty the King. I would ask the clerk to read the Address.

(Clerk reads Resolutions)

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman: In the course of the various addresses made in this House yesterday, more than one Honourable Member pointed out that this was one of the momentous periods in the history of this House.¹⁵² With that opinion I agree. In fact I would go further and say that it is perhaps the most momentous occasion in the long history of the country. Yesterday when I was listening to the excellent addresses of Honourable Members, I went back in mind to the year 1855 and visualized the Members of this House of that day sitting in the Chamber, and congratulating themselves upon having at last attained the privilege of responsible government, and I wondered if they had only had an opportunity of reading the Report of the Royal Commission, what their feelings would be, and if they would have been as gratified at the result to the country of 78 years of responsible government. It seems to me that if we had been in their place we would not consider that we had any cause to congratulate ourselves on having obtained the privilege of self-government, and if they were here to-day they would, I think, concur in the view that what we need now is a political holiday, and a breathing space in which this country will once more have an opportunity of working out its destiny.

However, these are vagaries of the imagination and it is imperative that we can get back to the consideration of the problem at hand. I am quite sure that we all intend to consider this matter dispassionately and disinterestedly. In this connection I should like to say that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is, I believe, conscientious in the view which he holds. He would not be a true citizen of Newfoundland if he were not. But he has added nothing whatever to the value of our discussions. In saying this I would like to point out that since this Government came into power we have received the utmost courtesy, consideration and cooperation from the Leader of the Opposition. He has shown a sincere desire to assist us in enacting the wisest possible laws for the country.

¹⁵² The transcript contains two versions of this speech. One is the verbatim transcript; the other is an edited version. This text generally follows the verbatim transcript, but the edited version has been used in some places for greater clarity.

When considering this – and we have been considering it, some of us, for a long time, because after all, this is nothing new to us, this choice that we knew we must make sooner or later, because we knew that sooner or later we should be on the financial rocks – we now have to weigh both sides of the balance against each other. Are we prepared to accept the offer so generously put to us by the United Kingdom Government, or are we to turn that down to await the inevitable result, so far as I can see, default? And default, to my mind, Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members of this House, would be unthinkable. We have committed many sins, God knows, in the last twenty years, of omission and commission in this House – I am speaking of men who are at present Members of this House and others who are outside this House – but I think the last straw would be if we condemn this country to default. That would be the last straw. It would cap the climax of fourteen years at least of the worst possible government to which any country could ever have been treated.

The Report itself, Mr. Chairman, I believe you will have to agree with me that though the word pictures are very dark, they are by no means encouraging as to the past, but we must confess their truthfulness.¹⁵³ It seems to me almost uncanny how those three Commissioners, particularly Lord Amulree, appear to be able to enter into the minds of our people and give us such a true picture of our affairs, which we must, if we are going to be truthful to ourselves, which we must admit is only too true. Lord Amulree and his colleagues went in and out through the country; they went wherever it was possible for them to reach, and met all classes and conditions of men. They held their investigations in camera. There was no possibility of any man being silenced in what he was going to say because he was afraid. He felt that he could open his heart and mind to those three Royal Commissioners, because he knew that though whatever he might say might be used, he would never be identified with what he had said.

During their travels through the country, Lord Amulree formed a wonderful attachment for the people of this country. When he came back from Canada, I remember he said to me, "Well, it is like getting home to get back to St. John's." And he told me once, "Do you know, Mr. Prime Minister, that your people are the most lovable I have ever met." If the Report has criticized us, we may be sure that it was not done through any animosity. It was not done through any harsh spirit, but rather a desire that we should take advantage of the past. We should have our picture as it appears to others painted in its true light, so that we might use it as a guiding post for the future. We are given a certain choice and while the way may appear hard, it is really the only way out of our difficulties.

Mr. Chairman, it makes me very proud that every one of my colleagues are in favour of giving up office. Some of them, I know, because they have the ability and inclination, are cherishing political ambitions. We have three years to run, we are willing to give that up, my colleagues are – I am getting near, as I said, I am past the meridian, so that I don't count. When I see my young colleagues willing to give up their political opportunities of the next three years, to make a name for themselves and to help the country in the way we could do with responsible government, but nothing like what can be done under government by commission, I say it makes me very proud to say that my colleagues are willing to give up their cherished ambitions for the sake of this country of ours,

¹⁵³ "The Report itself gives the Commission's idea of the low state of political morality in this country during the last quarter of a century. The picture which they paint is a dark one but we must at least do them the justice to admit its truthfulness." (Edited version)

and to show that we are real stock of the glorious British Empire.

The Report has been commended all over the country. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition quoted some telegrams – he quoted the Great War Veterans' Association. Every branch of the Great War Veterans, every branch has telegraphed to Headquarters they are behind the Report of the Royal Commission and its recommendations, and surely if any men or any group of men are to be listened to, it is the men who went across the sea and fought for us. When they see our interests will be safe in the hands of government by commission, surely it gives us all cause for thought. They can see, they should know, they have gone over and made sacrifices. They should know what it means when we hand over a large extent of our destinies to the Mother Land.

Another telegram was quoted by the hon. gentleman, which I think he probably received Sunday morning from Toronto, because I received the very same telegram Sunday morning, signed by Mr. S. A. Brett. I don't know if the Leader of the Opposition replied to that message. I did, and I shall read my reply. It was to Mr. S. A. Brett, Secretary, Executive Committee, Newfoundland Association of Toronto: "Telegram received. Respect sincerity of your opinion, but public sentiment in Newfoundland as expressed spontaneously through meeting of Board of Trade and Great War Veterans' Association in City and outports and pronouncements of clergymen and other representative citizens indicate wholehearted acquiescence in acceptance report and resolution for temporary suspension present system of Government. Under these circumstances consider it unnecessary incur enormous expense which holding of referendum would involve." According to the Leader of the Opposition, the further one is away from the scene of action the better one is able to judge the merits or demerits of any case. I suppose if this Association had been in Vancouver they would have been still better able to form an opinion, to use the simile that when one is too far into the woods, one cannot see the forest for the trees. Therefore, Toronto being well away from the woods is able to see the Newfoundland forest and can form a better opinion as to whether we should accept or reject the Royal Commission's Report or not. In other words we should consult with those outside the country as to what action we should take.

While we are on this subject, I happened to take up a paper last night, one of the largest papers in Canada, which being far from the scene of action should be able, if we adopt the view of the Leader of the Opposition, to form an impartial view of the local situation. I think it has the second largest circulation, and I cut this out from the editorial.

"It is unnecessary to go into the circumstances that led up to Newfoundland's present sorry plight, save to point out that it is the culminating climax to a period of fourteen years of exploitation of the Island by politicians to serve their own ends; fourteen years of attempts to live upon borrowed money, and the direct outcome of the combination of such conditions and three years of depression exaggerated in Newfoundland's case by three successive seasons – prior to the current year – of disastrous poverty to the fishing industry. Under the proposed form of commission government Britain will have direct and close supervision and control of the Island's finances, and the whole cost of parliamentary government will be saved. The possibility of further graft will be eliminated; the strictest economy will be the order of the day and the people will be enabled to carry on until they are able to support themselves and a government once more. It may take a few years; it may take several, but eventually the Island will be brought to a state of prosperity and its credit restored, and her bonds once more a preferred security in the world's money markets. She will be entrusted again

with the management of her own affairs. Newfoundlanders are a good, hardy, thrifty, courageous and long-suffering people. They have had enough of politicians. They know now how they have been exploited and to what it has led them, and it will be nothing short of a miracle if they do not profit by the stern and painful lesson they have been taught. In this time of their distress they are assured of the very deep and practical sympathy of Canadians who will be a unit in wishing them a speedy period of rehabilitation to prosperity and restored prestige within the Empire and before the world."

I think that is very pertinent, Mr. Chairman. One might say that we have been to a large extent at the mercy of politicians. It has been going on for a number of years, and I know my honourable friend on the other side will acquit me of attempting to fasten any of that iniquity upon himself. Believe me, many of us have given a good many hours, a good many hours of the night too, in trying to solve this problem and see if there was a way out, but we could not. I had hoped during the first part of the Leader of the Opposition's speech that he had some alternative suggestion to make, but I have been disappointed. I am afraid there is nothing but for us to take it or leave it. The terms that have been offered are so very generous, it seems to me it would be ungracious, ungenerous of us to say, "Make those terms better; make them more liberal." These proposals have come to us unasked and unsought. I don't see how we could ask the United Kingdom Government to do what they offer to do for us, and expect them not to have some restrictions, some supervision of our expenditure in this country.

No amount of economy – and I am sure most people of this country will admit that we have practiced economy almost beyond the point of efficiency – I say no amount of economy, no amount of prosperity, not even the most prosperous of years will help us to carry the present burden of debt interest. For the sake of clearness I will quote some figures which I have made up in a concise form. At the present time, we are liable for an annual payment of \$5.2 million including exchange. The Public Services cost us annually \$4.8 million. Relief and Contingencies account for \$1½ million, making a total of \$11½ million as the lowest possible figure at which the country can be run. In making up these figures I have greatly underestimated the actual requirements. When I say that it costs \$4.8 million annually, I should also explain that we cannot keep it at that figure. There will have to be some increases. The members of the civil service are underpaid. In many cases they are not living but are merely existing. On the other hand we must remember that only once in the history of the country did we have a revenue that could balance that expenditure of \$11½ million. That was during the good times when fish was selling for \$14.00 per quintal, and the prices of other products were proportionately high. And even in that year the government of that day borrowed money in spite of having the largest revenue in the history of the country.

Now let us contemplate the other side of the picture. If we were to refuse the generous offer of the United Kingdom Government, we would inevitably be faced with default. I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition realizes what default would mean, and how long would any of us be in the House of Assembly if we refused to accept this offer of the Homeland? If that happened, I would not undertake to insure our lives for three months, and I would not be surprised but that the result would show itself before that. We owe to the banks a floating loan of \$6½ million, against which, under the terms of the agreement, our Customs revenue is hypothecated, which means theoretically that the banks can go down and seize that revenue. Supposing this House refused the proffered help from the

United Kingdom, and we passed legislation annulling the legislation under the agreement made with the banks in January 1932, what would happen? Would not the banks withdraw from Newfoundland immediately and leave us bankrupt? Not only would we be bankrupt, but we would be outlawed in the eyes of the whole civilized commercial world. I do not care to dwell upon the consequences of such an action. Frankly I believe our very lives would be in danger from the enraged people of the country. Further, I would be willing to wager that, if we defaulted and refused to accept the terms, the generous terms laid down, before the middle of February next one-third of the people of Newfoundland would be starving. That seems a hard and strong statement to make, but it is true. We owe the shopkeepers of this country over \$500,000 and at the end of December we will have \$600,000 in the banks with which to maintain the public service, pay for the dole, and run the country generally. If we default now, does anyone think these shopkeepers will continue to give us any more credit? Certainly not.

If we throw out this generous offer of the Home Government, they will treat us as we deserve to be treated, and the walls around us here should be decorated because we would be traitorous to our country and to the Empire. We may be narrow-minded and self-centred here in Newfoundland and there is a larger view of things. We are members of a glorious Empire, the finest and freest since the world began. We are part of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and it is one of the proud boasts that no part of the Empire has gone back on its pledged word. Are we to be the first? What will it profit us if we retain responsible government and lose our own political souls, our honour, in the end?

I was rather surprised yesterday when listening to the Leader of the Opposition. He seemed to infer that our present financial troubles came all of a sudden. Surely he must have known of them for as many years as I have, and has had more opportunity of knowing of the desperate condition we were in. He will remember early in December, 1931, when the Prime Minister of the government of that day sent an S.O.S. call to the United Kingdom asking for financial help. It was turned down. Then three gentlemen were sent to Montreal and made arrangements to get sufficient money to pay the interest on the loan falling due on January 1, 1932. That money was advanced on the understanding that a certain arrangement would be signed by the then Prime Minister and the then Leader of the Opposition, and it was to be subject to control by the government financial controller. That gave a temporary respite, but we were always piling up debt. We had not then started to economize, and it seemed shameful and cowardly to me that we should keep on wasting and squandering money at the expense of our children and our children's children. It was scandalous, I thought, and I have always raised my voice against it. Then we came to June, 1932, when the future was mortgaged again. A monopoly was created on oil and petroleum products. That meant extra heavy duty on the fishermen and it meant something like \$300,000 had to be paid directly or indirectly to somebody. To satisfy the bondholders we had to borrow to pay the interest at the 30th of June of that year.

Now we come to the time when the present Government appeared on the scene of action. I referred the entire situation to the Dominions Office, and when I had done that I felt I had done sufficient. They came back in December and said, "You must not default. The repercussions not only in Newfoundland, but throughout the British Empire, will be tremendous. If you will accept a Royal Commission to enquire into your financial condition the United Kingdom and Canada are prepared

to stave off default." We could not refuse to accept that offer. We would be ungrateful and un-British if we had refused. Then we came to January 1933, when Lord Amulree asked me if I was worrying about the payment of the bonded interest. I said that I was, as we owed so many millions. He stated that the British Government were coming forward with the money for us again, and added that it would be a great mistake to default, and that if it was humanly possible the British Government were not going to allow us to default. Then we had the publication of the Royal Commission Report on November 21st last. I was sitting with my colleagues in the Executive Council Chamber when the Report was released. I believe the generosity of the terms nearly took our breaths away. It seemed to me almost impossible to believe. In spite of the extravagance, misrule, and mismanagement of the past, the British Government said to us, in effect, "We are not going to disown you. You are a splendid people and worth looking after. For three years we are going to see to it that your debt interest is met and we guarantee to meet the bond interest until these bonds mature." All we are asked to give in return is to pass this Address.

What good has the franchise done for us? Has it not degenerated¹⁵⁴ the great bulk of our people? If the men of 1855, when they sought responsible government, had known what the result would be in 1933, we would have had representative government and no more. So I feel that responsible government is only a theoretical boon and not what it is cracked up to be.¹⁵⁵ If we accept the proposals of the Home Government, not one man in 500 will know the difference except he will see prosperity in the country. He will see capital coming to the country and he will see Bell Island moving more ore. We will have a larger fishery, and, perhaps, fishermen will get a great deal more for their products; and every Dominion of the Empire will have their doors open to give us a chance to sell our fishery products. Capital will come in because it will feel assured that it is in safe keeping and will not be gambled away, because, let me tell you, nothing is more timid than capital, so that when capital the world over knows that the British Government is guaranteeing principal and interest of our debt, they are taking no chances. A man told me this morning that since this issue came up in the House there was renewed confidence in the Civic Loan in St. John's and that \$150,000 worth of bonds had been subscribed to. That shows that whenever a country has stability and sound backing behind it, people are not afraid to invest their money.

I disagree with the letter of Sir William Coaker who says that if we accept, our position will be lowered to that of a Crown Colony and we will be accorded the same type of government as is given to niggers. He is wrong, and I hope innocently wrong. Our status will be better than that of a Crown Colony. A Crown Colony is run by a Governor and the House is subservient to him. He is practically a dictator and he is responsible only to the Colonial Office. We will have six commissioners, three Newfoundlanders and three from the United Kingdom. They will govern through the Governor and he must take their advice and can only refuse on the same grounds as he can the present Executive Council. He will have no more authority than at present. We will be betwixt and between a Crown Colony and a Dominion. We shall still be under the jurisdiction of the Dominions Office. We will have no dealings with the Colonial Office. As far as the affairs of the

¹⁵⁴ In the edited version, "impoverished."

¹⁵⁵ In the edited version, "... and in our case has proved a curse instead of a blessing."

country are concerned, estimates and the like will be broadcast through the country for the people to examine. A budget will be issued and I hope there will be no suppression of any figures or anything of that kind. We shall have "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." When the figures show that we are on a solid basis again we can appeal to the United Kingdom, and if our affairs are found to be on a solid enough basis we will get responsible government again. In this connection I wish to read [a] copy of [a] dispatch which I have received from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

"His Majesty's Government in Great Britain does not contemplate continuance of commission form of Government for longer than is essential and you can certainly give assurance that it would be open to outside body to make representation either to the United Kingdom Government or to the Newfoundland Commission Government in due course when it is felt that conditions necessary for restoration of self-government had been fulfilled."

Now that is good enough for any of us. That sets forth the position in clear and unmistakable terms and I am quite sure that we can accept it in absolute good faith as an honourable undertaking on the part of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

One point I would like to emphasize, and that is that we are now at the beginning of a new era in our history. This is only the beginning, this is only the starting point. We have been relieved of the nightmare of default, but we have all got to work hard. I agree with the remark of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition when he said that it is the duty of us all to cooperate. We can save our country by cooperation. We have got to forget political animosity, we have got to get together and work hard for the good of the country. I can see a splendid spirit [of] cooperation spreading all over the Island, and I hope that we shall be doing our best, all of us.

I would ask the cooperation of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition in the efforts that will be made to lift the country out of its present difficulties. The people are at present in a desperate plight, many of them have very little food and practically no clothing. A large proportion of our people have been in a state of despondency for the past three or four years. How must that situation be faced? If a man asks you for bread are you prepared to say, "I cannot give you bread, but I will give you a vote instead"? No, Mr. Chairman, the cry of the people is for assistance. Every indication points to the fact that in all sections of the Island the Report and its recommendations, as well as the proposals of H.M. Government in the United Kingdom, are hailed as the first glint of sunlight after years of storm and stress, overhung with the black clouds of depression. Therefore it is that after calm and careful deliberation my colleagues and I have come to the conclusion that it is our duty to accept the Report and its recommendations in their entirety, as well as the proposals of the United Kingdom Government.¹⁵⁶

And in moving the adoption of this Address to His Gracious Majesty I believe implicitly that I speak for the fishermen of the country who have been crushed into hopeless poverty through successive years of unremunerative toil, whose welfare will now be ensured;

I speak in the name of the loggers whom the operation of economic laws in these times of depression have reduced almost to conditions of slavery;

¹⁵⁶ The final section of this speech appears only in the edited version and in newspaper reports.

I speak on behalf of the miners, formerly employed at Bell Island, who have been deprived of their livelihood by the practical shut down of the mines, which has impoverished nearly the whole of Conception Bay;

I speak on behalf of workers of all classes who have been thrown out of employment, and to whom the developments foreshadowed in the Report will bring the prospect of profitable labour;

I speak in the name of thousands of women and children who are suffering the pangs of hunger and cold, who have tasted the lowest depths of degradation during the past few years, and whose lot the new regime will do much to alleviate;

I speak in the name of the clergymen, the businessmen and the war veterans of the country, who have already publicly endorsed the Report;

I speak in the name of the civil servants and the school teachers, to whom is held out the hope of a return to a decent standard of living; and in the name of the schoolchildren whose opportunity of acquiring a decent education will no longer be retarded;

And finally I speak on behalf of all Newfoundlanders when I say that we thank His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for the generous offer they have made to us in our extremity; we are grateful for the promised development of our resources, we trust implicitly in their honourable intentions, feeling confident that a full measure of responsible government will be restored to the Island when we have again been placed upon a self-supporting basis, and that we fully, frankly, and freely accept the Report and the conditions laid down in the White Paper, and subscribe to the Address, which I now have the honour to move.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I would like at the outset to express my thanks to the Prime Minister for the kindly terms in which he has referred to myself, and I can only say that whatever form of government we may have, whether it is responsible government or commission government, that government, even though I may disagree with it, shall always have my hearty support and cooperation in the interests of this country. The Prime Minister and I disagreed on many occasions, and there were many others on which we agreed, but I don't think there was ever an occasion when he could accuse me, since I was Leader of the Opposition in this House, of playing party politics. Rather, I think he would say that I always looked to the good of the country. It is certain that we are going to have commission government, and commission government under the terms laid down in the resolutions and the accompanying annex. As that is to be the situation in this country, for how many years I do not know, I trust that every man and woman will do their utmost to assist in all activities which tend to the welfare of the country. My views are to some extent opposed to those of the gentleman opposite. I am convinced that on the main question of limiting powers of expenditure we are in total agreement, and with that phase of the situation I will deal with later.

This, Mr. Chairman, is my last speech in this House. This House in recent years, particularly in the last three or four, has been regarded with disfavour and yet it has been the scene of many notable debates and much eloquence. The names of Little, Shea, Thorburn, Whiteway, and Bond¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ All (except Shea) premiers (the title prime minister was introduced after 1909) of Newfoundland. P. F. Little, Liberal, 1855-1858; R. Thorburn, Reform Party, 1885-1889; W. V. Whiteway, Conservative and Liberal, 1878-1885, 1889-1894, 1895-1897; Robert Bond, Liberal, 1900-1909. Ambrose Shea was a prominent and influential politician from the 1840s to the late 1880s, but never premier.

will recall to the minds of many debates of a character to which those of to-day can hardly be compared. These were outstanding men, and their names are written on the pages of the history of this House in letters which will not be effaced by time. Even during the ten years that I have been here, I have known men, patriotic men, whose only thought was to serve the land of their birth, in spite of the fact that they were on many occasions accused of self-seeking at the expense of the people. I can carry my mind back some 30 years to the famous Bond administration, certainly to the days of 1909, when to accept a fair remuneration from the state was to be branded as a grafter by his opponents. Why, even the great Bond was so stigmatized, and even when a man received no remuneration, only grudgingly and with intense regret was he regarded as a man whom they had nothing against

This is the closing session of this House's activities. The lights will soon dim and we will pass out. Then the lights will flare up on a new scene of a very different form of administration, which may hold much of good or evil for the country. I can hardly be blamed for feeling some sense of drama, and some urge to indulge eloquence, but that is not my intention and even if it were, I am no Edmund Burke or Abraham Lincoln. I propose to offer a straightforward statement of honest views, and I think it can be seen my remarks are not made with any thought of seeking votes.

One of the daily newspapers to-day published an attack of a political nature on me. I did not talk politics here yesterday, and it is not my intention to do so to-day. I made no attack on the Government, there was no reference made to their good deeds or bad deeds, and I made no personal attack of any sort. I deliberately refrained from anything of that type, and I did so because of the seriousness of the occasion and the momentousness of the decision which we have to make. This morning I was accused of having an axe to grind by a hired scribbler of the Tory press, whose tongue utters pious platitudes while he is stabbing a man from behind. I know him, and he is not free from political graft and probably hopes for more. I would like to go back some 25 years, and re-read for the good of his soul some of the slanderous utterances he made regarding Sir Robert Bond. They would give him some food for thought. I shall doubtless be treated to another such attack to-morrow by this libel on humanity, but let him do his worst.

The only reason I refer to this matter is because I have to address the House this afternoon; otherwise his utterances would be beneath contempt. I am not seeking votes and I have no illusions as regards the effect of my remarks on the government ranks. The approbation of the Government, the Royal Commission, the British Government or the public of this country cannot weigh with me to-day. I am looking for nothing, and I have a right to utter them. They may be regarded as valuable or invaluable, but if you remain within the sound of my voice you are going to hear them. I have a keen desire that my remarks should be regarded as honest, and even if I were accused of playing politics or self-seeking, I submit that with the inevitability of this scheme going through, that such a charge would be beyond all peradventure ridiculous. The attitude I take is the natural conclusion to be drawn from the type of politicians we have had for the past number of years, If there were any plums going, Bradley was going to have them. He was a pariah. Even that makes no difference to me now.

We have had this Report and the White Paper before us for about a week, and as I said yesterday, very few people have had the opportunity to read them. Quite a number of people got their reactions through the public dispatches, others read them through the newspapers. Some of the

members of the House have read the Report from end to end. I submit, however, that this Report should be read both carefully and laboriously in order to arrive at an intelligent conclusion and appreciation. As far as the people are concerned, they can have no conception of the highly technical and in other instances involved financial clauses, without some explanation. Most of their ideas are derived from the newspapers and they are politically partisan. There is no doubt about this having been made a party measure. His Excellency's speech announced it as a party measure, and it was quite apparent yesterday afternoon when the vote was taken on my amendment on the motion to adjourn. The government party is solidly behind this measure and the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister so intimated this afternoon.

Yesterday afternoon this resolution was tabled. I had no knowledge of it until the Prime Minister sent it to me about half past one yesterday; neither had my colleague until he heard it here yesterday afternoon; neither had the country, and I am asked within 24 hours to come to a decision upon a proposal which involves more for the people of this country than any other proposal which ever came before this House in its history. Now, if it had been regarded by the Government as more or less a national matter, surely they would have called us of this side of the House into consultation before. They have been in possession at least of the main features of this scheme for months, but it appears to have been carefully kept from us. We had no information; nobody offered us any information except such as got upon the street, and which emanated from Government circles in the nature of mere surmises, so we were told, but strangely enough all these surmises emanating from Government circles coincided exactly. Now, coincidences, of course, frequently happen and it may be that a number of the gentlemen who sit on the other side of the House did guess exactly the same thing and were right.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: You said that we knew the contents of the Report.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: I did not say that. I said you had some knowledge of the contents of the Report.

Hon. Secretary of State: As far as I am concerned, that is not so.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: I am not accusing any particular gentleman. I am simply stating that a number of gentlemen on the other side of the House could tell some citizens in this town two months ago substantially what we have here to-day. It was not official, of course, and it might be a coincidence, but they all guessed the same thing. They may be good guessers, but the fact remains that it was regarded as a party matter and not a national matter, and within 24 hours I am asked to make a decision upon these proposals, because I had no knowledge of what the Government was going to propose before the notice came before the House at all. I too might guess, with my limited abilities, in that direction. I may say that up to a week ago, I had no knowledge whatever as to what these proposals were going to be. I too had made a guess, but, Mr. Chairman, I was many miles from the truth, and this scheme which is laid before us now I have to decide upon within six days, seven days, from the time when I first got any knowledge of it at all, and 24 hours from the time when the proposal is laid before me in concrete form. Now, my examination of it can only be superficial in its

character, and the examination of every other man who had no knowledge of it previously can only be of the same type.

I have listened to the picture painted by the Hon. Prime Minister here this afternoon. I credit him with sufficient honesty to say that I think he believes in what he says, but I am not satisfied that the rosy picture which he has depicted for us this afternoon, will turn out to have any foundation in reality, and that rosy picture, to a substantial extent, is in the minds of many who have had some opportunity to give some superficial examination to these documents. I fear – and I am sorry to have to say this – I fear that they are fated to have many of their castles in the air tumble about their ears. Some will know that those who are owed substantial sums of money by our Government will unquestionably be paid. Possibly, as the Prime Minister has pointed out, civil servants and others, teachers, will receive addition to their remuneration, but when? Surely, before these salaries are advanced appreciably, Newfoundland's finances will have to be a little better than they are to-day, because as the situation now stands, it seems to me that Britain will in all probability have to find anywhere from three million to five million a year to pay our deficit anyway.

Britain's offer is generous, there is no doubt about that. No one can suggest for a moment that there is any duty cast upon the British taxpayer to pay our bills, and very few governments would be so generous with a dependency as Britain is prepared to be with us. And then dealing particularly with the Report, we find that various industries are labelled as needing rehabilitation, but it must be remembered that substantial additional expenditures will be necessary before anything can be done along those lines, and we cannot expect the British Government to take British taxpayers' money to rehabilitate industry in Newfoundland under existing conditions; that they will do their best is unquestionable.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: May I say a word?

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: It will be good business for England to do that. The quicker she gets us on our feet the better.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: I would like to put it on a higher plane than that myself.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: It is the economic view.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: In spite of the fact that I am prepared to agree right here and now, that within two months after the passage of this measure you will see a different face on things right here in St. John's, I am prepared to admit that on the whole, within the next two months or three years, you are going to find that there will be disillusionment, disappointment, and reaction. It is inevitable; why, the very altitude of the faith of those who now believe will be the cause of that reaction.

Now I want, if I can, Mr. Chairman, to finish before six, because it is not my intention to delay this matter. I have no object in standing here for the sake of standing. It is not obstruction, and I know I can't defeat the measure. If I happen to stand in the breach in a losing fight, I can only do

my best and take my licking.

There is, Sir, an outstanding objection to these proposals, and it is an outstanding objection which, in my opinion, is not regarded as vital by the British Government. No serious consideration is given to it at all. Has any sober thought been given either by the Government or anyone else as to the possible danger of suppressing entirely the voice of a people such as ours? Has any serious thought been given to that? Have the members of the Government done so? Has the press? I thought I saw a glimmer of thought in one of our local dailies a few days ago, when they said something about "The voice of people being the voice of God," but the subsequent utterances of that journal indicate that this was merely phraseology, or the people that were intended to be referred to in that particular remark were a select few. Now, I don't intend to give you any academic dissertation about the values of representative government this afternoon, but I am going to confine myself to a repetition of the bold dictum of a man named Abraham Lincoln, of whom you have all heard, and who, I think all will admit, was not only a patriot, but a very capable president of the United States of America, and his words were, "Good government is not a substitute for self-government."

What may be useful, however, in our consideration of this plan, is that I should attempt to demonstrate the practical application of the principle of its destruction. It will not be denied, it cannot be denied that all forms or manifestations of popular control are completely swept away by these proposals, though perhaps it may be said pedantically that this House being the representatives of the people and having passed the measure, that therefore it is the will of the people. That is a theoretical argument, but one thing is certain, once that is done it ends. Anything that transpires, or any action that the new government takes, is certainly not the will of the people. When once we pass under this form of government, the commissioners are supreme. They make all laws; they impose all taxes; they spend all moneys without reference to anything the people may have to say. True, they are not without responsibility to somebody – they are responsible to the British Government, and the British Government is 2,000 miles away. The British Government will know very little about the views of the people of this country, and can only check up [on] their trustees from a distance. But we of this country have no voice to check that condition. We are not even left with a representative assembly that might be regarded in the nature of a high-class debating club to air our grievances. We have nothing to express the will and desire of the people. Yes we have a press, but we haven't a free press. The press of this country is subsidized by private interests, and it can hardly be expected that a press in that position is likely to express unbiasedly the views and aspirations and wishes of the people, when they may be in opposition to the views and interests of their subsidizers. It is true there are some other avenues of expression. There are various organizations such as the Board of Trade, the Importers' Association and the Manufacturers' Associations. But these are all bodies organized purely for private and special interests, and how can they be regarded as in any way expressing the wishes and the interests of the great mass of the people, as against the interests for which they are specifically designed?

In point of actual fact, the voice of the people is stilled, muted, gagged, and rendered inarticulate, and that brings us to the position that we have no legal or constitutional means of making the will of the people known. What is left for them? How can they make their influence felt? Since they have no legal or constitutional means of doing so, they are left to illegal ones. Or worse still, the people may degenerate into well-fed beings whose only desires are full bellies, and who

have no thought whatever of the high duties of citizenship. Or will they leave their native shores, and go to countries where they are at least assured of being free men? For they are no longer free men here, not as we understand it, as a free man is a man who has some voice in the destinies of his country. He may not have the power to enforce his will, but he has a means of expressing his views, and that is denied to the Newfoundlander under this scheme.

Now, reference was made a few days ago, and again this afternoon by the Prime Minister, to the effect that our new status will be something between a Dominion and a Crown Colony. I have to take issue with that statement. I care not who the commissioners are, or to whom they have to report their doings. It is true there may be some types of Crown Colony who have no right to any [say] whatever in their affairs, but there are many who have, and who have representative assemblies. Some of them have power of veto, or refusing money; but certainly they are not in the position which it is proposed to put the people of this country in, where they have no voice in anything whatever. Newfoundlanders will be simply a governed people. Rather would I say the position of this country will be between a Crown Colony and nothing; nay, more than that, actually nothing.

Reference has been made in the newspapers by some writers to the fact that we will be in a worse position than the blacks and untouchables of India. From the standpoint of constitutional rights that is true, because there are blacks and untouchables within the Empire who have more rights to a voice in their own governments than the people of Newfoundland will have after the passing of this measure. We have read of the untouchables, who are a long distance away. Let us pause for a moment and see what that word means. The natives of India are divided into many castes. There are the Brahmins [*omission*]. At the bottom of the castes stand the untouchables, who are looked upon as outcasts. An untouchable is such a pariah amongst his own race, that if his very shadow happens to fall upon the body of one in a caste above him, that body is polluted and his clothing must be burned, he must thoroughly bathe himself and go through religious ceremonies in the temples before that pollution is removed. Still, these untouchables are given the right to vote. Why, they even have to provide special booths for the untouchables, because the other tribesmen will not go into the booths where they are; and yet they will have more say in their own destinies than the people of Newfoundland will have in years to come.

Despite the Prime Minister's statement that this new form of government is going to be for a short period, I predict that it is going to be many years before Newfoundland is going to be self-supporting again. To that position frankly the Liberal Party cannot and will not assent. If that scheme of government is brought in, the Liberal Party will assist. We are not the party to make trouble in this country. Whatever the kind of government will be, as long as it is in the interests of the country we are supporting it. We must accept the system as it is, but we are not prepared to vote for it. We realise as well as anyone the necessity of some form of control in this country to-day. We realize that this country has gone to the devil in expenditure, and we realise the responsibilities of the politicians for that, as well as by ourselves. We realize that if Britain is paying our bills, that it would be insane for Britain to allow us to carry on the same old merry dance. Since the days of the late Robert Bond I for one – and I think I speak for the Liberal Party – am not averse to the system of financial control, nay, we invited that, and even the politician who is reasonably honest – because, after all, honesty is difficult to find in mankind – will welcome that, because it will avoid a lot of trouble for himself, if for no other reason, and in this regard I speak from ten years' experience. Yes, Sir, we stand for

control. We believe that control must come, but we do want some means left to the people of this country of expressing their voice. Should there be an election to-morrow, I do not believe that any body of men in this country would dare go to the polls and advocate a complete rejection of the British Government's offer. Certainly we would not. [But] judging the matter from a constitutional standpoint, and in view of the fact that these sweeping resolutions are destroying for many years all the rights of the people, I think it is reasonable that the people should have some voice in the administration of the affairs of their country.

Even the Royal Commission's Report itself in one section dealing with Confederation, distinctly lays down the principle as axiomatic that no deal of that kind should go through without an appeal to the electorate. Well, under Confederation at least we should have some rights. We would get more votes than we have now, because we would have a vote for the Dominion Parliament and one for the provincial legislature as well. But here not only is it proposed to take away the vote of the people, but these proposals are going to do so without any reference being made to the people, to whom the right belongs. If it is axiomatic, if it is constitutional that Confederation should be referred to the people, then surely this matter which is contained in these resolutions ought to be referred to them for their expression of their views on the subject, and that is much more the case when we recollect the following incident which happened in 1932.

Shortly after the dissolution of the House of Assembly, there appeared in one of the newspapers of this country a letter by Sir William Coaker. Sir William, to my knowledge, had for at least two years before that been advocating the adoption of some form of commission government, and this letter reiterated his position in that connection. It promptly evoked [a] response from the present Prime Minister in the public press, in which he made the pronouncement that if his party were returned to power, he would appoint a committee or commission to investigate into the possibility and desirability of the introduction of a commission in this country, and further that if the committee reported favourably on that scheme of government, then he would submit the question of introducing a commission form of government to the people for their election. That statement was made in reply to Sir William Coaker. The Prime Minister subsequently incorporated it in his manifesto, and it became part of his pledge, part of his undertaking to this country, part of the agreement made with the electors of this country, part of his share of the bargain.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: What bargain?

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: The bargain that if they would elect you, you would do this for them.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: I will answer when you have finished.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: You may answer now, Sir, if you wish. That bargain was carried out up to a point. There was a [Royal] Commission appointed. That Commission has reported in favour of commission government and a particular type of commission government not dreamed of by a single man in Newfoundland, not even by the Prime Minister himself when he made that promise, that is now to be foisted upon the people of this country without their being given an

opportunity to say a single word about it.

There are several courses, two at least, open to the Prime Minister by which he might keep his word. True it is that he may say that conditions have changed, but his promise has not changed. He cannot say that he did not know the conditions of the country at that time as well as anybody else, because he had all the figures before him. He could not have anticipated that his return to power would be followed by a general uplift of trade, and that there would be work for everybody when he ascended to power; that was impossible. He made a promise, and that promise is as yet unfulfilled. I say to him now that in my opinion, and I don't care who disagrees with me, he should either invite His Excellency the Governor to dissolve the Legislature and appeal to the electorate, or submit the matter to the people in the form of a plebiscite.

Now I am well ahead of the limit I placed upon myself, and I promised at the beginning that I would not delay the proceedings of the House. I am well aware of the fact that nothing that I can say will make any difference. Many will doubtless regard me as a visionary and a false prophet, and probably some will still regard me as a self-seeking politician attempting to grind my axe. The only direction in which I can be safely accused of attempting to grind any axe, is that I believe my justification will come with time.

And Sir, in view of this position, I am going to give the Government the opportunity to pass upon several ideas I have in my mind, some of which I have already indicated and some of which I shall indicate in a few minutes. I propose the following amendment:¹⁵⁸

... that the Prime Minister should appeal to His Excellency the Governor for a dissolution of parliament and appeal to the country on the new form of government suggested. [*Daily News*, November 29, 1933]

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: On the evidence as indicated there will be no dissolution of this House by appeal to the electorate. There is going to be a dissolution in another way.

... that the will of the people should be taken in the form of a plebiscite. [*Daily News*, November 29, 1933]

Hon. Minister of Justice: Mr. Speaker, I think that the proposal now made by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is one which reiterates the views expressed by him this afternoon in connection with this question, and with reference to one or two points in association with this question, and with reference to one or two points in connection with what he said this afternoon and yesterday, some reply should be made.

The Prime Minister this afternoon, in the course of his introduction of the resolutions, pointed out the fact that time is an important factor in connection with the move now contemplated, and indicated that the Leader of the Opposition should make his remarks dispassionately and as

¹⁵⁸ Mr. Bradley moved eight amendments, all of which were defeated by straight party votes. They are not fully reported in the surviving transcript, and do not appear in the *Journal*.

shortly as possible, and allow the matter to be carried through as early as possible. It is obvious from what he said yesterday and this afternoon, that it is his purpose to deal with a number of suggestions put forward as amendments and suggested to the Committee in the course of the debate, but the major one is the one now proposed. He has made it an issue that acceptance of the proposals of the British Government in regard to the financial and constitutional position should be the subject of a plebiscite, to the people, to ask them whether they will accept the change of government and the control of finances, and the assistance so generously offered.

He has described the position in which Newfoundland will be under the new proposed form of government as being lower than that of Crown Colony government, as being lower than that of the untouchables in India, as depriving us of all our rights, as taking away from us all voice in government and practically making us serfs. Where he gets these ideas from it is difficult to imagine.

I remember some years ago meeting the honourable and learned gentlemen when he was a supporter of the very much-condemned Tory party led by Prime Minister Monroe, and he told me at that time that the condition of the country was perfectly appalling. I agreed with him. I agreed with him as to the difficulties with which the government of which he was a supporter, and of which I was an opponent, was faced; and he told me that these difficulties were such, and that the responsibilities he had to bear were so great, that they interfered with his sleep at nights. I think the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has conjured up his descriptions of Newfoundland's position as a result of these nightmares.

I would like to point out that there is almost entirely absent from his remarks any reference to the generosity of the Royal Commission and the British Government. The whole idea of his remarks both yesterday and to-day was to depress the minds of his hearers. Has he suggested one single benefit that Newfoundland will get as a result of these proposals? Has he suggested how this financial assistance will help our country get back on its feet?

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: You may not have heard it, but I did.

Hon. Minister of Justice: Well, it must have been at very short length. I was in the House during all of his speech except for ten minutes [when] I was called outside. When I left he had made no mention of it, and when I returned he was still in the doldrums.

Now Sir, what is the position as regards placing this question before the people as a referendum? I would like to point out that we have heard a lot of talk on the streets of a mandate, and I want to point out that we have no mandate. The question of a mandate is one which is capable of very great elasticity. I intend to show how much it has been stretched both rightly and wrongly, and I propose to give chapter and verse. It is usual for a political party going to the country to lay down a policy which it intends to pursue, and generally they pursue that course. In some circumstances this policy has to be abandoned. This happens both as regards major issues and minor issues. Take the history of any country in the world, and look up in the manifestoes of its statesmen and see what they carried out. See how much of their manifestoes they were forced through circumstances to abandon. Look at any of the great countries of the world – far larger and wealthier than ourselves, whose destinies are guided by the world's leading statesmen. Look at them, and see if they are carrying out the suggestions in their manifestoes. You will find that the finest men in the

world had to change their views as circumstances compelled. The question of a mandate is governed by the prevailing circumstances of the time. Look at the history of any large country and look at some of the large policies that are put through without any suggestion of a mandate, and you will see how absurd this attitude is.

I will mention a few instances that occurred locally. Take the instance of Sir James Winter in 1898 when he introduced what is known as the '98 Contract. Did he have a mandate? Of course he did. Was it a good contract? Some say it was and some say it wasn't. I say it was, but I realise that there are many people who take the contrary view. Would my honourable and learned friend say that he had made a mistake? The Hon. Leader of the Opposition bows down in admiration of Sir Robert Bond. Did he have a mandate when he made the contract of '01? Which was such a terrible blunder, and which was one of the causes of our insolvency to-day. We cannot blame Sir Robert Bond. He had every good intention and he had a mandate from the people. Did Sir Edward Morris have a mandate from the people in 1909 when they decided to build the branch lines? Of course he did, he had an overwhelming majority. At that time the history of our railway justified it. There was no thought in the minds of our people of war, or the competition that was to come following the development of motor cars. There was no thought that the scheme was going to be such a complete failure.

Let us look at the other side of the picture. Was there any mandate for the fish regulations of 1920, introduced by the government led by Sir Richard Squires and sponsored by Sir William Coaker? I am not questioning the integrity of their purpose, they thought they would work but instead they were a terrible failure, and they were done without a mandate. Was there any mandate to introduce the "dole" regulations, and they have been a failure? They were introduced without a mandate, but there is no suggestion that the government of the time was actuated by any but the highest motives. Was there any mandate for taking over the Railway and paying the Reids \$2,000,000? None, whatever. Was it contemplated that it would be a big factor in running the country into debt, by paying its deficits year after year? Was there a mandate for responsible government? Was there a mandate to the British Government for responsible government? Yes, and the people clamoured for it. Was it a success? If we could place ourselves in the position of those who clamoured for this mandate and look into the future up to 1933, do you imagine that these men who had that mandate would inflict it on us? If they know the vicious principles, the waste, dishonesty, extravagance and political debauchery that would engulf their country, do you think they would inflict responsible government on the country? Yet they had a mandate. Looking down over the list it doesn't matter very much whether there was a mandate or not, one side pretty much balances the other. We are all human. We have all to learn by our mistakes. Was there a mandate in England to declare war on Germany? Was there a mandate for us to join in and spend millions of dollars, not to mention [to] scatter the flower of that generation over the fields of France? Yet we were right. Was there a mandate in England for the formation of a National Government in the crisis of a couple of years ago?

It was only because they were over the crisis that they went to the country, but there is another aspect to this question of mandate which my honourable and learned friend has completely overlooked. When it comes to the point of asking the people of a country to vote upon a particular matter, there must be an alternative. Just to take the simple case that we all have in mind, we had a

referendum in this country in 1916 on the question of Prohibition. Now, what was before the electorate then? It was one question: Shall we have Prohibition or shall we continue as we are? We had an alternative, Prohibition or a continuation of our present existence. What have we got here? What is the alternative that you offer the electorate? It is here that my honourable and learned friend has completely failed to lay anything before the Committee. What is the alternative that you offer to the people of this country when you put the referendum before them – to continue as we are? We offer the people to continue as we are when on the 31st December we owe \$2,000,000 in interest and the Treasury is empty. That is the alternative. Why offer that to the people? The only thing is either accept all this or starve. As the Prime Minister said this afternoon, by February one-third of the population will be starving. Then why have a referendum? The thing is self-evident, and I am surprised that my honourable and learned friend, who had such a great opportunity of joining with the Government party in supporting this matter, did not grasp it with both hands.

Mr. Chairman, I intervened in the debate just to deal with these two points. I do not know whether my learned friend will undertake a reply. I shall listen to it with the greatest of interest if he does.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: I have no desire to delay the House. What I have said, I have said.

Hon. Minister of Justice: Quod scripsi, scripsi.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: If I have to undertake to answer all the questions that might be urged by the Government party, I have got some job.

Hon. Minister of Justice: The Hon. Prime Minister in the course of his remarks pointed to the exceptional keenness that was displayed by the Commissioners in this Report. He pointed out to the Committee that it meant a considerable amount of work, that it meant the application of great intelligence, and that they have produced a document which is unique in the history of this country. In some respects I think it can fairly be said about the Report, that they were somewhat too severe. There are passages to which exception might be taken, but I am satisfied that even in that respect there was an object in the minds of the Commissioners when they used the language they did, and bearing in mind that it is the report of independent men, men who had no interest in the matter before us, no desire to deprive us of what we know as our constitutional liberties, men who came here with one object in view, and one only, and that was to offer us the best solution that their independent and great minds could consider. Bearing that in mind, I suggest to all readers of this Report that it should be put into simple language. It should be digested, made shorter, and made a textbook in our schools so that the generation that grows up will know something of the political history of this country, its good points and its bad points from the time when we first had representative government 101 years ago. Consequently, when a few years hence the opportunity will be given to them to vote for a new parliament here, they will be able to vote with a knowledge of the political history of this country that will save them from the errors which have been unfortunately so frequent in the past.

... that the three representatives from Newfoundland on the commission be elected by the people.¹⁵⁹ [*Daily News*, November 29, 1933]

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: I beg to move the following amendment:

“As the commission to be appointed by Her Majesty will be for the passing of legislation, including legislation dealing with the taxation of Newfoundland people, that Newfoundland should be represented in the British House of Commons.”

Now, I hear the titters of amusement and levity from the gentlemen in the other side of the House. I have not made that amendment without a reason. Taxation without representation to-day is unknown in the British Empire, practically. The people who have to pay the bills surely ought to have something to say in the expenditure. Admitting, admitting the sins and shortcomings of ourselves as Members of this House of Assembly, and casting the same slur upon preceding Houses as we have thrown upon ourselves, the principle still stands, that the man who has to pay the bill ought to have something to say.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: England, fortunately, is going to pay the bill.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Part of it. We have already admitted here in this House this afternoon that as Britain is going to pay the deficits, she certainly should have something to say in the government of this country, but as we are to provide the funds then we should have some say also.

Hon. Minister of Justice: In the governing of Great Britain?

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Just a minute now, don't hurry yourself at all. I am going to take my time whether you do or not. The fact that Newfoundland might have one, two, three, four, or a dozen representatives in the British House of Commons during the period of commission government is not likely to sway the destinies of the Empire greatly, in view of the fact that there are some 615 members in the House of Commons. The point that I am trying to make is this, that as we have to pay the bills, that as these bills are imposed by a commission which is responsible to the British Government and not to us, that there is the only avenue through which Newfoundland can make her wishes heard to-day under this new scheme. I do not desire that we should send men to the British House of Commons for the purpose of influencing British policy, it is hardly within the range of possibility that they would do so, but we [should] have someone there to plead the case of the people. Remember that a commission government is in the nature of an autocratic government. No matter how honest they may be, power in the hands of a few is a dangerous thing. We have reason to know that in this country, and the principle of representation, as I say, is almost universal throughout the British Empire. It is one of the basic principles of the Empire, and it was the failure to recognise that principle which in 1776 lost Britain the greatest jewel in her crown. They have never made that mistake since, and I am not, Sir, I am not at all sure that Britain would not consider a proposal of

¹⁵⁹ The debate on this amendment is not recorded.

that kind. If it could be obtained, then the people will have some avenue through which their complaints can be heard by the body having control of those whose agents are here ruling this country.

... that as the [Royal] Commission Report pointed out that the cause of the present condition was due to the inefficiency of past governments, no person who has been a member of parliament for the past 25 years be a member of the commission [government].¹⁶⁰

... that no person who has served in the House of Assembly during the past three years should be a member of the commission [government].

... that no member of the present House of Assembly should hold or be appointed to any position in the civil service in the next three years.¹⁶¹

... that the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the President of the Legislative Council and the Prime Minister be a commission of three to proceed to England and confer with the Secretary of State with regard to the suspension of the constitution. [*Daily News*, November 29, 1933]

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

The Chairman from the Committee reported that they had considered the matter to them referred, and had passed the said Resolutions without amendment.

On motion this Report was received and adopted.

Here follow the Resolutions as passed by the House:

Be It Resolved: *That a humble Address be presented to His Majesty the King in the following words:*

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty:

Most Gracious Sovereign:

We, Your Majesty's most Dutiful and Loyal Subjects, the Legislative Council and Assembly of Newfoundland, humbly approach Your Majesty praying that:

Whereas *in the present emergency Your Majesty's Island of Newfoundland is unable from its own resources to defray the interest charges on the public debt;*

And Whereas *the Royal Commission appointed by Your Majesty's Warrant bearing the date the Seventeenth of February, 1933, to examine into the future of Newfoundland, has recommended that for the time being, until such time as the Island may become self-supporting again, the administration of the Island should be vested in His Excellency the Governor acting on the advice of a specially created Commission of Government and that during such period Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom should assume general responsibility for the finances of*

¹⁶⁰ The debate on this and the following three amendments is not recorded.

¹⁶¹ Mr. Lewis abstained from this vote.

Newfoundland and should, in particular, make such arrangements as may be deemed just and practicable with a view to securing to Newfoundland a reduction in the present burden of the public debt;

And Whereas Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have signified their readiness, subject to the approval of Parliament, to accept the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and have made detailed proposals for carrying those recommendations into effect;

Now, Therefore, Your Majesty may be graciously pleased to suspend the Letters Patent under the Great Seal bearing date at Westminster the Twenty-eighth day of March 1876, and the Letters Patent under the Great Seal bearing date at Westminster the Seventeenth day of July, 1905, and to issue new Letters Patent which would provide for the administration of the Island, until such time as it may become self-supporting again, on the basis of recommendations which are contained in the Report of the Royal Commission, and of which a summary is set out in the Annex hereto;

And Further that Your Majesty may be graciously pleased to cause to be laid before the Parliament of the United Kingdom at its present Session such a measure as may enable them to be given immediate effect.

ANNEX

Extract from the Report of the Royal Commission Appointed by His Majesty's Warrant Bearing Date the Seventeenth Day of February, 1933

634. (4) *We therefore recommend that the Newfoundland Government, recognizing that it is impossible for the Island to surmount unaided the unprecedented difficulties that now confront it, should make an immediate appeal for the sympathetic co-operation of Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in the adoption and execution of a joint plan of reconstruction, of which the following would be the main features:*

- (a) *The existing form of government would be suspended until such time as the Island may become self-supporting again.*
- (b) *A special Commission of Government would be created which would be presided over by His Excellency the Governor, would be vested with full legislative and executive authority, and would take the place of the existing Legislature and Executive Council.*
- (c) *The Commission of Government would be composed of six members, exclusive of the Governor, three of whom would be drawn from Newfoundland, and three from the United Kingdom.*
- (d) *The Government Departments in the Island would be divided into six groups. Each group would be placed in the charge of a Member of the Commission of Government who would be responsible for the efficient working of the Departments in the group, and the Commission would be collectively responsible for the several Departments.*
- (e) *The proceedings of the Commission of Government would be subject to supervisory control by Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Governor-in-Commission would be responsible to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in the United Kingdom for the good government of the Island.*
- (f) *Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would, for their part, assume general*

responsibility for the finances of the Island until such time as it might become self-supporting again, and would, in particular, make such arrangements as may be deemed just and practicable with a view to securing to Newfoundland a reduction in the present burden of the public debt.

- (g) *It would be understood that, as soon as the Island's difficulties are overcome and the country is again self-supporting, responsible government, on request from the people of Newfoundland, would be restored.*

On motion of Hon. the Prime Minister it was ordered that the said Resolutions do pass, and that they be sent to the Legislative Council with a Message requesting the concurrence of that body therewith.

It was moved and seconded that when the House rises it adjourn until to-morrow, Wednesday, the twenty-ninth of November instant, at three of the clock.

The House then adjourned accordingly

Wednesday, November 29, 1933

The House met at three of the clock in the afternoon, pursuant to adjournment.

Pursuant to notice and on motion of Hon. the Prime Minister, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider certain Resolutions to provide for the issue of certain securities on the credit of the Dominion, for the postponement of certain securities of the Dominion and for the giving of priority to certain other securities thereof.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. Shea took the Chair of Committee.

Hon. Minister of Justice explained that the subject matter of the resolutions had been contained in an exchange of cables between the Departments of Justice in England and Newfoundland, and for that reason he would take charge of the Bill going through the House. The cables in large measure had to do with verbiage and drafting.

The resolutions dealt mainly with the matters as contained on page 252 of the Royal Commission Report. Whilst the figures show the public debt to be \$100,769,771.44, the actual public debt of the Dominion at present is \$98,453,805. In view of the fact that this includes the present sinking fund of \$2,300,000, and that the terms, as outlined, are that the \$2,475,000 which was borrowed from the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada to pay our interest last year and this year, will be paid, it will mean that the public debt of the Dominion will then be almost, in round figures, \$96,000,000.

The proposals of the British Government necessitate classification in two parts. The second schedule of the resolutions deals with securities issued in the United Kingdom, registered in Colonial Stock Acts [which] become English trustee securities. The amounts set out in this total \$9,701,465. These are the trustee securities referred to in the White Paper, and are treated preferentially in the financial part of the White Paper. The holders of these will receive stock at 3 per cent, but the amount of stock they will receive will depend on the interest due, and stock will be issued to provide that they receive as much income from the new loan at 3 per cent as they do now at higher levels of interest. An alternative is to pay the bondholders at the nominal value, but the Treasury has the option of paying in this manner.

The first schedule deals with what are known as deferred securities, and really means the balance of the public debt, excluding temporary loans in cash. The loans include the money raised from the banks and from the Canadian Government, if that government requires it to be paid. The balance will then be subject to the proposed conversion loan. Stocks in this conversion loan will not be trustee securities and bondholders must come in.

The Minister then took section by section and explained all to the House, and answered various questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Government. [*Daily News*, November 30, 1933; *Evening Telegram*, November 30, 1933]

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

The Chairman from the Committee reported that they had considered the matter to them referred, had passed the said Resolutions without amendment, and recommended the introduction of a Bill to give effect to the same.

On motion this report was received and adopted, and the Bill, "An Act to Provide for the Issue of Certain Securities on the Credit of the Dominion, for the Postponement of Certain Securities of the Dominion and for the Giving of Priority to Certain Other Securities Thereof" was introduced and read a first time, and it was ordered that the said Bill be read a second time on to-morrow.

Mr. Gray, on behalf of the Select Committee appointed to draft a Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech from the Throne, presented the Report of the Select Committee, which was read as follows:

To His Excellency Admiral Sir David Murray Anderson, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of Newfoundland.

We the Commons of Newfoundland in Legislative Session assembled, beg to thank Your Excellency for the Gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Branches of the Legislature.

(Sgd.)
 Norman Gray
 George Whiteley
 H. M. Mosdell
 W. H. Abbott

Assembly Rooms
 Nov. 29, 1933

On motion this Report was received.

On the motion for the adoption of the Report, Mr. Bradley moved and Mr. Starkes seconded the following amendment:

That in the opinion of this House the matter referred to in Your Excellency's Speech at the opening of this Legislature should be referred to the people either:

- (a) By a dissolution of the present Legislature and a General Election;*
- (b) By a referendum thereon;*

And that, in either event, a Committee be appointed by Your Excellency consisting of the Speaker of this Honourable House, the Honourable the President of the Legislative Council and the Honourable the Prime Minister to be a delegation of three to proceed to London to confer with the Secretary of State for the Dominions with a view to arranging terms that will not involve loss by Newfoundland of Representative Government.

Or, as an alternative:

Either that the three representatives of Newfoundland on the Commission be elected by the people of Newfoundland.

Or, that as the Commission to be appointed by His Majesty will have power to pass all legislation, including legislation dealing with the taxation of the Newfoundland people, Newfoundland should be represented in the British House of Commons.

Or, as a further alternative, that:

As the report of Your Majesty's Commissioners indicates that the main cause of the present difficulties of Newfoundland is directly attributable to the inefficient and wasteful administration of succeeding Governments for about a quarter of a century, no person who has been a member of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland at any time during the past twenty-five years should be appointed a member of the proposed Commission;

And that in any event, no member of the present House of Assembly should hold or be appointed to any position in the Civil Service of this country during the first three years of the term of the proposed Commission.

Whereupon the house divided and there appeared in favour of this amendment: Mr. Bradley; Mr. Starkes.

And against it: Hon. F. C. Alderdice; Hon. L. E. Emerson; Hon. J. C. Puddester; Hon. W. Winsor; Hon. J. G. Stone; Hon. H. Mitchell; Hon. W. J. Browne; Hon. H. A. Winter; Hon. S. J. Foote; Hon. W. J. Walsh; Hon. K. M. Browne; Mr. M. A. Shea; Mr. Harold Earle; Mr. H. W. Quinton; Mr. E. Gear; Mr. Norman Gray; Mr. Chas. Furey; Mr. Jos. Moore; Mr. W. H. Abbott; Mr. Geo. Whiteley.

So it passed in the negative.

The original motion for adoption of the report was then put and there appeared in its favour: Hon. F. C. Alderdice; Hon. L. E. Emerson; Hon. J. C. Puddester; Hon. W. Winsor; Hon. J. G. Stone; Hon. H. Mitchell; Hon. W. J. Browne; Hon. H. A. Winter; Hon. S. J. Foote; Hon. W. J. Walsh; Hon. K. M. Browne; Mr. M. A. Shea; Mr. Harold Earle; Mr. H. W. Quinton; Mr. E. Gear; Mr. Norman Gray; Mr. Chas. Furey; Mr. Jos. Moore; Mr. W. H. Abbott; Mr. Geo. Whiteley.

And against it: Mr. Bradley; Mr. Starkes.

So it passed in the affirmative and was ordered accordingly.

On motion of Hon. the Prime Minister, it was ordered that the Address in Reply be presented at His Excellency's convenience.

It was moved and then seconded that when the House rises it adjourn until to-morrow, Thursday afternoon, at three of the clock.

The House then adjourned accordingly.

Thursday, November 30, 1933

The House met at three of the clock in the afternoon, pursuant to adjournment.

At half past three of the clock a Message from his Excellency the Governor was delivered by the Gentlemen Usher of the Black Rod commanding the immediate attendance of Mr. Speaker and the House in the Legislative Council Chamber.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker and the House attended His Excellency in the Council Chamber, and the Joint Address to His Majesty the King from both Houses of the Legislature was presented to His Excellency by the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the House of Assembly, when his Excellency was pleased to assent thereto and agreed to transmit the same to His Majesty the King.

Pursuant to Order, and on motion of Hon. the Minister of Justice, the Bill entitled "An Act to Provide for the Issue of Certain Securities on the Credit of the Dominion, for the Postponement of Certain Securities of the Dominion, and for the Giving of Priority to Certain Other Securities Thereof" was read a second time, and it was ordered that the said Bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, there is only one principle involved in this Bill, and that is the principle of providing, through gratuitous assistance, so much out of the funds which we owe to other people, that we cannot find ourselves. In point of actual fact, the Bill admits there is a default. We cannot pay our bills, and it is only through the generosity of the British Government that we are able to pay in part. That is the only principle, apart from technicalities, involved in the Bill, as we all understand it fairly well I trust, because of the exhaustive review which was given us in Committee yesterday afternoon by the Hon. Minister of Justice. For our part, we see no reason, therefore, why the Bill having been read second time, should not proceed through Committee stage and third reading. There is no object in wasting our time here discussing a matter which we all know of.¹⁶²

Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. Shea took the Chair of the Committee.

Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Mines: Mr. Chairman: Before the curtain finally drops upon the last act of the drama which has been in the course of operation in this country for 100 years, because of the fact that I have held a seat in this Assembly perhaps longer than any other sitting Member who is here this afternoon, I think I ought to take the opportunity of saying just one or two words before

¹⁶² "... The bill provides that some people must accept a lower rate of interest than they are now receiving or nothing at all. In this it was default. He did not intend to discuss the matter at any length as it would be a mere waste of time dealing with this of which nothing was known." *Daily News*, December 1, 1933.

we depart from this Chamber, some of us at least never to return.

I want to join with the remarks that just fell from the lips of the Leader of the Opposition, when he said that no good purpose could be served by prolonging the proceedings of this Assembly any further. I want also to join with him in expressing on behalf of those I represent, my appreciation of the splendid service which has been rendered us by our Mother Country. I don't want to subscribe to various remarks which have fallen from the lips of speakers in this Assembly during this and other Sessions, and with certain propaganda statements made by the public press with regard to all who have held seats in this Assembly over the past quarter of a century.

This country has been the victim of a vicious system. The men who have participated in public life were not altogether to blame for it. It is not that the Assembly was corrupt, it is more that the system was corrupt, and those who have played a prominent part in the public life of this country for the past quarter of a century must know that the men [*omission*] for the bailing out of public funds, without having any regard whatever as to how, when and where these public funds were to come from, and where they would be paid back. The man who was regarded in the past public life of Newfoundland as being the most popular man and the most desirable was the man who could shout the longest, fight the hardest, and receive the greatest amount of public funds. It is all very well for us now in the closing scenes of responsible government, which has lasted for 100 years, to blame this state of affairs on any particular group of men. I do not subscribe to the idea that our troubles began with the borrowing of money for branch railways. Our troubles began when we made the first borrowing, when we were no longer able to carry on from current revenue and we had to borrow. Then our troubles commenced, and the situation has been getting worse as the years went on, but I think that when the money markets of the world no longer were prepared to subscribe to loans in this country was the happiest moment of our lives.

As I approach this matter this afternoon from the sentimental standpoint more so than any other, I would say that when I entered public life in 1913 at the call of my constituents, I came to this House of Assembly with one object in view, not with any idea of enriching myself at the public expense, I came in here for the purpose of honestly devoting my time and talents, if I had any, in the interests of the constituents that sent me here. During the past twenty years my bitterest enemy would credit me with having some little seriousness in having done something substantial to carry out the pledges that I made. Here again, because of the vicious system, it was impossible to do anything along the lines I hoped to do.

Now, it is all very well, as I said before, to blame our troubles on the borrowings for building branch lines or building highroads. I was not a Member of the House when legislation was put to this House to build the various branch lines, but I was a member of the community, and I gave my strongest support to the party that went to the country under the banner of building branch lines. Ninety-nine per cent of the people wanted branch lines, and the political party that went out in opposition to that policy had no more chance of coming into this House than I have of taking wings and flying to heaven this afternoon.

During the period that I have spent in this House of Assembly, I have known very fine, patriotic, talented, honest Newfoundlanders like myself, who held seats in this House. I don't subscribe to the idea that all men in politics during the past 25 years have been grafters. You could count the men who have betrayed the trust of the people on the fingers of one hand. Strange to say,

during the 25 years that I have held a seat in this House, 27 men who sat with me in this Chamber are this afternoon, I hope, sitting in heaven. Twenty-seven men have passed away, not alone from this Chamber, but from this earth, and among these men are some of the finest class of British subjects that can be found in any part of the British Empire. Here again I would like to say in passing, that it has been suggested as to why the Mother Country has been so generous to us in our troubles, [that] it must be remembered that this ancient Colony, the oldest Colony in the British Empire, is more British than Britain herself. We have here in this country a population who are British 99½ per cent. You can go over in London and find men belonging to all races on the earth, but here in this country we are all English, Irish, and Scottish. Barring a few Chinamen and perhaps one or two natives of Africa, this country is British to the core.

That is why, Mr. Prime Minister, it is a splendid tribute to you and your party, it is a splendid tribute to this House, to find that you could come in, introduce such a drastic measure and pass it through both branches of the Legislature in 48 hours. You passed the legislation because there was no other alternative. If I saw any possible hope of being able to retain the boon of responsible government, I would not for one moment subscribe to the legislation that has passed in this House, and I think that these feelings are the same that beat in the breast of every man in this House of Assembly. It is the same feeling throughout the length and breadth of this land. We can only hope and pray that the younger generation that grow up and will be eligible for seats in this Assembly, we can only hope that the population will become sufficiently educated so as to fully realize the responsibilities and the work that a legislature should be called upon to do. It is common knowledge, the vicious system that we have had in vogue here for the past quarter of a century. When a man is elected to the honour of a seat in this Assembly, he is bombarded by his constituents for all kinds of extravagant demands, and the constituent is not altogether to blame, because when he goes before them in campaign he makes all kinds of rash [*omission*]. The time that should be taken up by men who hold seats looking after parliamentary work, is taken up trying to get places in hospitals, trying to get a road to a well or a road to a garden, or some other work that should be handled by municipalities.

I sincerely trust and think that it would not be very long before this Newfoundland of ours will be able to send another petition, not through its House of Assembly, but through its people, through the properly appointed Commissioners, and His Excellency the Governor, over to the British Throne, to ask to have responsible government returned to us. I hope when that day arrives, the various people throughout the country who have a sincere regard for Newfoundland will devote their time in trying to point out what is meant by being British, by citizenship. The clergymen of the various denominations have a very important work to perform in this direction. So have those who have the responsibility of the education of our youth, and it behoves each and every one of us who have played a prominent part in the public life of our country for the past quarter of a century, to devote the balance of our time in assisting in that laudable work. If the Hon. Prime Minister came to my office ten days ago and said to me, "Don't you think you have been long enough now in public life? I have a position in mind that I would like to offer you, if you would be good enough to resign your seat and retire from politics." Mr. Chairman, I want to announce this evening from the inmost recesses of my heart that I would say, "Mr. Prime Minister, no sir; I love public life. I think it a great honour to represent my native district in the Assembly of the country." Now, any statement that I

have to make, I am going to be brief. I don't want to make any long speech. I want the few words that I say to be brief and to the point. I make that statement, and point out to the Committee how much I prize a seat in this Assembly. I feel this afternoon almost like as if I was standing at the graveside of my own parents, by standing here when about to commit what we regard as a boon, responsible government.

Now, I would like to make a short reference – I hope I will be pardoned, Mr. Chairman, – I would like to make a passing reference to some of the men in this Assembly side by side with myself during the past twenty years. Take Sir Robert Bond. He was elected the same year I was returned to a seat in this House, 1913. It is a well-known fact that Sir Robert did not occupy his seat gained in that election. Nevertheless he was elected to this Assembly the first year I came here, 1913. In that year Mr. Seymour, Mr. Parsons, and Mr. Piccott, all now dead, were returned for Harbour Grace District. Mr. Devereux was one of my colleagues in 1913, long since passed away. Mr. Sullivan, who was an opponent of mine in 1913 and who later became my colleague, is also gone to the Great Beyond.

The late Sir Michael Cashin, under whose leadership I spent many sessions in this Assembly, is now called to his eternal reward. Because of the prominent part played by Sir Michael Cashin in the public life of this country, and because of my close association with him during a number of years, I don't think I would be doing an injustice either to myself or to the memory of that great man if I should say a word about him before the curtain finally falls on this drama. Like every other man he was human. He had faults, but I don't think that anyone will question the fact that he was imbued with love of his country just as deep and sincere as that of any man who ever sat in this House. I trust that if he were looking down upon us this afternoon he would say Amen to the attitude we take in the matter of the Commission's Report. I believe he would sanction our move in the matter.

Then there are the late Mr. Carty, who was an opponent of mine in 1913, the late Captain Bonia, an opponent of mine in the District of Placentia in 1923. Like myself he was a native of the district which sent us to this House. He fought strenuously and hard, but honourably, and I don't think anybody could have accused the late Captain Bonia of having enriched himself by participation in public life.

The late Sir John Crosbie [was] associated with the party with which I was associated. He was in this Assembly for a long period. He was here when I came. Sir John Crosbie and Sir Michael Cashin were prominent figures in the public life of this country for a long time. Both have been called from the turmoil of party politics, and I sincerely trust that like Sir Michael, Sir John is resting in peace this afternoon. The late Mr. Clift [was] a colleague of Sir Robert Bond in the 1913 election. He was elected for Green Bay. He sat in the House on the other side – I was on the government side. He was another patriotic Newfoundlander, and he gave the best years of his life in the interests of his native country.

It may be said that little was accomplished by these men. Here I would like to remark, without any attempt to belittle the efforts of the men who compiled the Report just passed this Assembly, I want to say that had Lord Amulree, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Thomas, or any other man in the public life in the British Isles, [been] in the public life of Newfoundland during the past twenty years, and if they had to act according to the system that was in force, they would be able to do very little more than we did.

The late Mr. O'Dwyer represented St. John's East when I came here. The late Mr. Kennedy was a colleague of Lord Morris in the West End in the 1913 election when I came. The late Mr. Davey represented Burin. The late Mr. R. J. Winsor represented Bonavista North. Then there were the late Mr. Blandford and Dr. Jones. Then there is Captain Lewis, who is the father of the colleague of mine who sits here two seats to my left – a patriotic, honest Newfoundlander who devoted his whole life to the interests of his country, and who took pride in his seat in this Assembly. I had the honour of playing a small part in what will be referred to as the most famous by-election in the history of Newfoundland. I speak of the by-election in Harbour Main in 1920 or 1921. Were it not for the presence of this man's son here this afternoon, I probably would have more to say; but I don't think there is any man inside this Assembly, or any man anywhere, who could accuse John Lewis during the period he was in this House of advocating anything not in his opinion beneficial to the best interests of the country.

The late Mr. Downey who occupied the office I now hold, he was a colleague and for a time an opponent of mine, but whether as a colleague or as an opponent, he was always a friend. I always found him an honourable and decent man. Nobody can accuse him of entering public life for what he could get, because if anyone did he would be stating an absolute falsehood. It is well known that he died in hospital unable to pay his bills, after having devoted all the best years of his life in the best interests of his country.

Mr. Vinnicombe who was a colleague of the present Judge Higgins, and Mr. Fox, Mr. MacDonald who represented St. George's. Mr. Grimes, who sat for one or two Sessions in Opposition to me, but there's one thing I can say of George Grimes, I always found him to be a true gentleman. We disagreed on matters of policy; we often had a little scrap but we never took home with us any animosity. Mr. Targett, I might say the same about him. I did not know him as intimately, he meant well. Every man who comes here means well. They may make mistakes, but it is not their fault. The late Mr. Goodison, Speaker of the House when I came here in 1913; the late Mr. Emerson who represented Fortune Bay, and the late Mr. Moulton who represented Burgeo. The late Mr. Justice Warren.

In all that list, Mr. Chairman, there are 27 men, and it is a strange coincidence that the Assembly at the present moment is made up of 27 men. The number 27 who held seats with me in this House are now I hope holding seats in Heaven.

I have a word or two to say in reference to one or two of the prominent men who held the stage during a long part of the period I spent in public life and who are still with us, not in the Assembly of course, but in public life.

In 1923 it will be remembered by everyone [that] we had a crisis. We had several of them, but in this particular election delegation after delegation of private citizens and politicians called upon Mr. Monroe, pleading with Mr. Monroe that he would come and lead a party. He was very reluctant to enter politics. It was against the wishes of his own family, but in the interests of the country he finally agreed, and however we may disagree in this House now with the policy he inaugurated, I don't think there is a man inside or outside this House who can accuse him of entering public life for what he could get out of it. Those who were close to him during that period when he was Prime Minister of the country, saw that it must have been costing him tens of thousands of dollars per year to give up his own business and devote his whole time to the public life of the

country. It is said that his business suffered a \$100,000 loss. I don't know whether that is right or wrong, but I do say that he made a terrible sacrifice of his time - which could have been better spent looking after his business - when he spent it in the interest of the country.

During his period there was a large outgo from the public funds. We spent a lot of money building highroads and after the highroads had been built, then we found strenuous opposition to Mr. Monroe's policy. But when the money was there to be had, every section of the Island in which it was possible to build a road was crying out to Monroe and his associates for money to build a road. Mr. Monroe during his period was patriotic enough to refuse to accept a salary. He could have accepted a salary as Minister of Education. He did the work and took no salary during four years in office, thus presenting the colony with \$16,000 in salary. If he were a politician he could have diverted that amount to party funds to use whenever he wanted it, but he didn't do so. However, he got very little thanks from a large section of the country when the time came to vote for or against him.

Sir John Bennett played a very prominent part inside these walls for a long time period. I always found him to be a man above reproach. Sometimes I might have disagreed with his opinions as to policy, but never did I accuse him of having any other motive which would be in the best interest of the District he represented, and the country generally. The present Mr. Justice Kent and Mr. Justice Higgins. The old father of the House, Mr. Woodford, who came here the other afternoon in the closing hours of the Assembly; as I saw him look up at the Speaker and around the Assembly, I had an idea of the thoughts which must have been passing through his mind when he reverted to 35 years ago, when he held a seat in the Assembly. He may have been classified as a professional politician. I have been so classed myself. But Woodford entered public life as an independent man. He did not have to come here for the \$200 a year which was the sessional pay when I came here. I would state this afternoon without any fear of contradiction, that Mr. Woodford left public life after 35 years a poorer man by several thousands of dollars than when he entered it. Judge Warren, Judge Higgins, Mr. Halfyard, Mr. Cramm, Mr. Justice Kent, all held important positions during my period in public life, and I do not accuse even Sir William Coaker, whom I fought often and hard, of having any other intentions when he went to the people besides the interests of the people. He meant well, but his deductions were wrong and he made some terrible blunders.

At the closing of this Assembly, I want to say that I hope Members will not altogether lose interest in their constituencies from a public service standpoint. There is a great deal of important work to be done. It might be thought that when the commission takes over affairs, that all our troubles will be over, but that is a false impression to create. There is still a great deal of hard work to be done which can only be accomplished by the people giving their wholehearted cooperation to the various measures put before them.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I am done. I merely want to say this, and I direct it especially to the Reporters Box. With these few words I retire from public life. Before I gave my support to these drastic measures, I gave them serious thought. I gave them all the serious thought of which I was capable, not only in my own room, but I went and asked for divine guidance. I prayed to Almighty God to help me to do what was right. I wanted no child of mine in future years to think of me with scorn, as their father who had betrayed the trust of the people. Mr. Chairman, I take my seat satisfied that I have done my last act, that I have done my duty to my country, to my constituency and that I

have done my duty to my God.

Hon. Minister of Labour: Mr. Chairman, before the curtain falls and this House of Assembly closes for the last time, for how long we do not know – perhaps 50 years – I feel it my duty to make a few remarks. I have sat in this House for a good many years, and the only two members older in this House than I are Mr. Walsh and Capt. Winsor, and they have been here years before my time. Since my entry to public life I have been coming to this House year after year without a break. I have been here for four elections. Three times I held a seat with the Liberal party, and at the last session I saw fit to join the present government party. I frankly admit here and now that I saw the error of my ways. I want to say that I consider Mr. Alderdice, if not the very best, at least to rank among the best Prime Ministers that Newfoundland ever had. I speak from experience. Not very many Members have had the wide and varied experience that I have had on land and sea from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I saw many strange faces in this House, I saw some stormy sessions in this House. I took part in debates in this House. I was known as the stormy petrel of this House. I am a great-grandson of one of the first members of parliament in this country. My great-grandfather, William Brown, was a Member of the first Assembly after responsible government had been granted. [He] helped to bring in responsible government, and 100 years later his great-grandson helped to vote it out.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that I gave much thought to these resolutions before us to-day. I lost sleep over it. I spent much time thinking over whether I would support the recommendations of the Royal Commission or not. I saw that it was the only course, and the Prime Minister took the lead and immediately set about putting the country on its feet. I accepted the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and when I did so I felt that I was acting in the very best interests of the country.

Before I took my seat in this House last year, there was much criticism from the Opposition side of the House of my position as Minister of Labour. Since I took over this office I have had the best interests of the working man in my mind all the time. I was a working man all my life on land and sea. Since I took over that office last year I have found employment for over 2,000 men. My office is one of the busiest in the civil service, and I defy any man to say that I have not done my duty in the interests of labour in this country.

I feel, Mr. Chairman, that there will be no more responsible government in this country in my day, and I am a middle-aged man. If the country, [which] by the way has its hands full, can do better by commission government than by responsible government, then let the commission reign. responsible government has been a failure, and I want to agree with the remarks of Mr. Walsh, when he says that all politicians are not crooks, some are honest as well as others. Mr. Chairman, I have no desire to hold up debate and prolong the session of the House, and I merely say that as one of the oldest Members of this House, that the action I have taken I consider to be in the best interests of this country and its people.

He thanked the members of the House for the attention they had given him and he hoped and prayed that Newfoundland would reestablish herself in the eyes of the Empire and the world, and

that success would follow the administration of the commission which will soon take charge.¹⁶³
[*Evening Telegram*, December 1, 1933]

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

The Chairman from the Committee reported that they had considered the matter to them referred, and had passed the said Bill without amendment.

On motion this Report was received and adopted, and it was ordered that the Bill be read a third time presently.

Whereupon, with unanimous consent, and on motion of Hon. the Minister of Justice, the Bill entitled "An Act to Provide for the Issue of Certain Securities on the Credit of the Dominion, for the Postponement of Certain Securities of the Dominion, and for the Giving of Priority to Certain Other Securities Thereof" was read a third time and passed, and it was ordered that the said Bill be Entitled as above, and that it be sent to the Legislative Council with a Message requesting the concurrence of that body in its provisions.

Mr. Speaker presented certain correspondence from the Newfoundland Board of Trade, The Great War Veterans' Association, and the Board of Trade at Bay of Islands, which was laid on the table for reference.¹⁶⁴

Mr. Speaker informed the House that he had received a Message from the Legislative Council acquainting the House of Assembly that it had concurred unanimously in the resolutions sent up requesting "An Humble Address to His Majesty the King."

It was moved and seconded that when the House rises it adjourn until to-morrow, Friday afternoon, at three of the clock.

The House then adjourned accordingly.

¹⁶³ "Both addresses were enthusiastically applauded." *Evening Telegram*, December 1, 1933.

¹⁶⁴ "All supported the adoption of the Royal Commission report." *Daily News*, December 1, 1933.

Friday, December 1, 1933

The House met at three of the clock in the afternoon, pursuant to adjournment.

Mr. Speaker informed the House that, in accordance with the intimation received, His Excellency the Governor would receive the Address in Reply presently.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker and the House proceeded to Government House and having returned to the Assembly Room, Mr. Speaker informed the House that His Excellency had received the Address of Thanks and had been pleased to reply thereto as follows:

*Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Honourable House of Assembly:
I thank you for your Address in Reply to the Speech with which your present session was opened.*

(Sgd.) D. Murray Anderson, Admiral, Governor.

*Hon. the Prime Minister proposed, and Mr. Bradley seconded, the following resolutions:
Be it resolved that:*

1. The Legislative Council and the House of Assembly of Newfoundland do place on record their appreciation of the generosity of the provision proposed to be made by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for the immediate needs of Newfoundland, and do express their confidence that all measures calculated to further the restoration of the prosperity of the Island will have the grateful and hearty cooperation of all patriotic citizens.

2. His Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit a copy of these resolutions to His Most Gracious Majesty with an expression of the unfailing loyalty of Newfoundland to His Throne and Person.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me, and I am sure that the same thought is in the mind of every Honourable Member of this House, that it is fitting that we should express our gratitude, our lively sense of gratitude to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for the generous offer made to us, and which we have accepted, and which will be placed before the House of Commons for their decision as to whether they will ratify the proposals advanced by His Majesty's Government. Therefore I should like to move the following resolutions: (*reads*).

When we had the Address made to the King on Tuesday last, I outlined those ideas I had in my mind, and it seems to me that ever since then I have still further evidence of the soundness of the course we have taken. From all over the country I have been receiving telegrams from associations, societies, and private persons stating that we have taken the only course possible if Newfoundland is to maintain her integrity.

One thing that we cannot too often urge upon our people as well as ourselves is that the mere helping us in this way is not the solution of our problem. We shall have to solve our own problem. We must be prepared to work hard, and we must, as I have said so often in this House and elsewhere, we must be thrifty, diligent and self-reliant. Without the exercise of these qualities we

cannot hope to bring Newfoundland back to the position which she must hold sooner or later among the Dominions of the Empire. Our objective from to-day is to see how soon we can get back to responsible government, and if we all work together that may be sooner than we think. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has given ample evidence of his desire to put his shoulder to the wheel, and if all of the country takes that attitude, if we as a people are prepared to make sacrifices, then we will soon attain our objective.

I want to say that I am very proud of the Honourable Members on this side of the House. They have made sacrifices, and they have given up their places in this House. They have three years to run, and they have willingly given up their places. Surely such a spirit of self-sacrifice indicates an excellent lead to the people of this country at large, and that is what I want to accentuate. We must be prepared to work and sacrifice ourselves.

I must confess that I myself feel reluctant to relinquish the position that the people of this country were good enough to place me in. I had daydreams, perhaps they were only dreams, but I had an idea that when our term of office would be up, we would be able to return to the people and say that we felt sure that we had rendered good service to the country. I had great hopes for the fisheries. I knew that my colleagues in the Marine and Fisheries Department had splendid ideas, and that all he wanted was time and money to carry them out. My colleague in the Department of Agriculture and Mines had a sound scheme for the development of agriculture. These schemes will be carried on by others, but it would be more to my satisfaction and that of my colleagues if we had been able to do them ourselves for Newfoundland. However, we can't have everything we want in this world, and we must be prepared to make sacrifices and to relinquish the honour. We have done our best. We have made mistakes. It is human to err, but we have tried to do our best and in any question which came before us for decision, we have always considered what would best advance the country's interest.

In the future our motto must be work, and hard work, and economy, because this measure takes away the worry of our debt. Now we have the means to carry out our own salvation. If we are going to get back to responsible government, that depends on ourselves and on no one else. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have much pleasure in moving these resolutions.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, this resolution is one which in this House of Assembly is not debated, and it is fitting that at the close of the present Session our last official act take the form of an expression [of] loyalty in unanimity, for, to-day, Sir, if never before, the Government benches, or rather the occupants of the Government benches, and the solitary occupant of the Opposition benches, close their ranks and form one body with an expression of gratefulness to His Majesty's Government in Britain, and in an expression of loyalty to his Majesty the King. Loyalty in Newfoundland needs no lengthy assertion. It is axiomatic, and any lengthy remarks of mine at this stage would detract from, rather than add to the solemnity of the occasion. Therefore, Sir, without further prolonging – I was going to say discussion, but there appears to be no discussion – without further delaying the passage of this resolution, may I say that it gives me the greatest pleasure indeed to second the resolution proposed by the Hon. Prime Minister.

The said Resolutions were then adopted unanimously.

It was moved and seconded that His Excellency the Governor be respectfully requested to forward the said Resolutions to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

[On the motion to adjourn]

Hon. Minister of Posts and Telegraphs: Mr. Speaker, before this House adjourns, might I say a few words? Since the Commission Report arrived in Newfoundland, I have noticed in the papers many times letters from different individuals. I have also noticed in the papers from foreign countries the same. In reference to the Commission Report, Mr. Speaker, I may say that there are some very sad things. I have been a Member in this House on different times since 1904. I feel it my duty to myself, if not to anybody else, to make certain remarks and contradict certain remarks that I have seen in the daily papers and also foreign papers.

That Report was a very sad report to me, but under existing conditions I made up my mind after hearing part of the Report the first day it arrived, that there was nothing else I could do as a Newfoundlander only support that Report. Personally, I consider that the present Government as a whole has made great sacrifices. Politics, like everything else, once one gets into it, there seems to be an inclination to stay into it, but Mr. Speaker, during the last fortnight there have been times when I was sorry that I ever entered politics, through the disrespectful and very damaging utterances made in the different papers.

Now, Sir, I went into politics in 1904. I was asked to go into them. At that time I was up at the head of Red Indian Lake in the heart of this country. I was quite a youth at the time. I was wired for by Sir Alfred B. Morine and I refused to come. Later I was wired by the late Sir John Crosbie and I consented to come, and since that time, Mr. Speaker, I served four years on the opposite side of this House, but I claim, Sir, with four or five as good men as were ever born in this country or in Canada, or in the United States as well. Captain Charlie Dawe was one of them, one of the finest men that Newfoundland ever produced, and it was a bad day, Sir, when Charlie Dawe passed out. Mr. McKay was another one, Mr. Sydney Blandford was also another. In 1908, Sir, I went to the District of Bonavista Bay and fought the election there under Lord Morris. As you are well aware, Sir, we came back two eighTEENS. In the Spring we went back, and Lord Morris's party was elected by a big majority. I was defeated in 1913 and elected again in 1924; defeated in 1928, and elected in 1932.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you hear the public of this country, and you will also hear from the papers in Canada and the United States, about the rogues and thieves and the grafters that have been in politics during the last 28 or 30 years in this country. I throw it back to the papers of Canada and the United States and Newfoundland, that there are not, nor have [there] been in politics in this country, according to the numbers, as many grafters as there are outside. I have spent since 1904 at least \$20,000 of my own hard-earned money, that I made anywhere from Baffin Land to 300 miles in the Atlantic Ocean. I paid my election expenses, and I have not received, Mr. Speaker, a five-cent piece out of the pockets of this country any more than my salary, during the first four years I was in Marine and Fisheries, and my last eighteen months at the Post Office, and I challenge anyone to contradict that I did not earn it well and faithfully. A person would think that we are a crowd of serfs

that have been in the different governments in the country, and, as Mr. Walsh stated yesterday, you can count up by the dozens those that went into politics in this country and died beggars and, as far as myself is concerned, if I died to-day, I would not be very far off from one. I have given, not only when I have been a Member of the House of Assembly, service to my country, but as well when I was not in the House of Assembly, ever since the first year I entered politics, and Mr. Speaker, I am not a bit sorry for it. I have a clear conscience, Sir, as any man in Canada or the United States or Newfoundland, that I served the people I represented good and faithfully. Talk about graft and robbery, why we hear it every day from different stores around this country, of people robbing their employers. They go to the Penitentiary by the hundreds most every year, and I don't know of very many politicians that ever ended up down there yet.

Now, Sir, I speak personally here this afternoon because I realize it is probably the last time that I will ever have a chance to make a speech on the floors of this Assembly. I have made as many sacrifices in this country for the people of this country as any man under the sun. I stayed on shore during the Morris government for three springs and lost at least \$3,000 from the seal fishery. I have done it in the Monroe government, not for any personal gain to myself, because I never got any and I was not looking for any, but I thought it was for the best interest of the country, and I made the sacrifice. And now the people of this country blackguard men that are in the grave, and also men that are alive to-day in such manner as has been going on in the papers during the past fortnight, and I challenge if people in any other country would come up here and vote themselves out of a job. It is a difficult thing, when you are getting a livelihood for your family, and knowing that if you do such a thing that you have to take a chance as to whether you are going to get one afterwards or not.

I voted for the commission government to take charge of the affairs of this country. I voted for it, knowing that there was nothing else left for a common-sense man to vote for. I saw enough last Winter in my office that will [do] for me the next 25 years. Day in and day out, people whom I had been brought up with and who always had been independent were beseeching me, looking for clothes. Last Winter I received letters from hundreds of people in my District asking for assistance to keep them from starving, and who were almost perishing for want of clothes to wear. Now I do not think that our condition generally will be as good this Winter, as it was last. Therefore, I consider it my duty as a Newfoundlander to vote for a commission government. I like my independence as much as any man in this country does, but when it comes to a case of a starving country I think any man should be prepared to throw away his independence.

This House this afternoon reminded me of the prodigal son, who left his father and went away, but when he saw his mistake he returned home to his father who gave him the best he had. But it happened that his brother did not like that, and so far as this House is concerned we welcome the prodigal son, but the Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to welcome him.

I have not as gloomy an outlook for the future of this country as a great many other people have, and I look forward to coming here in five years time and listen to some of the young men of this country making their first political speeches. The Report is one to be proud of, though there is not as much in [it] as regards the fisheries as I would like to see, but I believe that much good will come to the fisheries and to the iron ore mines at Bell Island in the future. The present Government has been in office eighteen months, and I claim that more good has been accomplished through the operation of the Salt Codfish Act than has been done within the past 35 years. But the hardest part of

it all is that 30 years ago I persuaded the people to vote me into the House of Assembly, and I am here to-day to vote myself out.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I think it is meet and fitting that, in view of the solemnity of this occasion and the historical points of this last official sitting of this House of Assembly, that all of us who are privileged to occupy seats here at present should say a few words in justification of the stand or policy which we have adopted – I do not say as a party but as a whole – on this momentous issue. We owe it first of all to the country, secondly to the Districts which we are privileged to represent, and thirdly, by no means of least importance, to ourselves. Because, as I said the other night at a party meeting, upon the result of our actions as representatives in this House during the past few days will depend the future weal or woe of Newfoundland; and, if we all hope that the move we have taken will result in prosperity, independence, and happiness for our people in the days that are to come, we ought [to] at least be entitled to small, small recognition, even though that recognition be in the form of having the reasons for our move inscribed upon the pages of Hansard. But if upon the other hand – and God forbid, I say it with all sincerity – the move will result in consequences that might give us and our children's children cause to regret, then in justice to ourselves I say that we should at least take this final opportunity of having recorded in the pages of Hansard our justification, as representatives of the people, for the stand that we have taken. That is my only reason for making a few rambling and brief remarks this afternoon, so that in future years, if the occasion should arise, that at least I can say that my answer can be found in the official records of this House.

We are about to take a step which is unprecedented in the history of any self-governing dominion of the British Empire. As a matter of fact, we have taken it. We have discarded all constitutional liberty. We have requested the Mother Parliament – the King himself – to revoke our privileges of responsible government which were conferred on this country only after repeated prayers and sacrifices, and only after the people of that day were satisfied that it was in the best interests of the country. When we look back, standing as we all do to-day in agreement that these privileges should be revoked, we find in 1854 the people sought the privilege of responsible government. They sought the conferring on Newfoundland of a status which would make it more privileged than before. They were taking a step in the dark, and they took that step in the hope that once responsible government was conferred, that Newfoundland would progress and in the course of time that this chance would be justified.

Unfortunately, time has shown the reverse, but, Sir, I wish to pay tribute from my seat here in the House to those who have had the responsibility of stewarding the destinies of Newfoundland during the years of responsible government, and I wish in that respect to associate myself with the remarks of the Hon. Member for Placentia West and Capt. Winsor. I disagree with the findings of the Royal Commission, and I disagree with the villification that has been thrown at Members of this House by the press. I say, Sir, that the reason for the difficulties of this country is not the manipulations of the politicians in power, but a condition of things in the financial [world] that has brought about our difficulties. Newfoundland's position was unjustified, and that was a condition that was beyond the control of the men who were vested with the responsibility of guiding the ship of state. Conditions in the financial world in the past 25 years developed in such a way that the credit systems went from one extreme to another. In the days of Sir Robert Bond it was not easy to obtain

money on the credit of the Colony. History tells us that it was necessary for him to pledge his own private fortune as security, and then within a few years brokerage houses all over the world had their arms open seeking government investments, irrespective of whether or not the country as a financial risk was sound, and irrespective of the fact, from the point of view of good finances, whether the people would ever be in a position to pay. Newfoundland found itself in the position where it needed money to carry on development, and she went into the foreign markets and its loans were oversubscribed. So it continued during the war, we had only to ask to receive. After the war we suddenly found ourselves face to face with a financial crisis the world over, and the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme, and everybody was up against the same difficulties. Newfoundland was caught, as it were, in the vice. Consequently the state of affairs that we have to-day.

But, Sir, I submit that the men in control of Newfoundland's affairs were sincere, and that they acted as they thought in the best interests of the country, and the very men who to-day are prepared to villify the names of the men of the past, are the very men who were crying the loudest for internal development and capital expense on government account. Every expense within the country was borne by the people, and the money was raised on the credit of the people. The very interests who are complaining to-day took the bone and sinew and sucked the very cream from the blood of the Newfoundland fishermen, and then they turn to the politician to cover him with odium. I hope and trust that the regime which we are about to enter will see a change of all that, and that the men who earned their wealth in this country will reinvest their money in some [omission]. If we do that in the next 25 years, Newfoundland will be in a different condition. That is all I have to say as far as the past is concerned.

I have a few remarks to add as regards the present, and the stand I take as a representative of a district. When I read the Report I was satisfied as an individual that the recommendations were generous, and further that they allowed no alternative. There was nothing else left to be done but [to] support the motion for the adoption of the recommendations. I was not without some misgivings as to what my position was, as a representative coming in here to this House and voting away the constitutional privileges which up to now we have enjoyed. I was concerned as to whether I had the mandate, in casting my vote in favour of the motion, to speak on behalf of the 9,000 people in my district. There were times when I wished that this responsibility could be removed from my shoulders. There are times in the life of a man in public trust when he must make [a] decision which may have a far-reaching effect on his future life. Some days ago, the Leader of the Opposition raised the question of a mandate, and the Hon. Attorney General replied very effectively and gave precedents for the action of [the] Government in doing as it did. As far as I was concerned, the arguments of the Attorney General, although cogent and potent, did not strike the point which was the deciding factor in my mind, and I want to stress that point here this afternoon. If I were not satisfied in my own mind that the move that I was making were in the best interests of the country, and secondly in the best interests of the people whom I was asked to represent; if, Sir, I had been convinced that any other course was open than the one which I adopted, it would not have mattered what the Government did, it would not have mattered what this House of Assembly did, I, as an individual would have voted against the motion, not because I am not satisfied personally that it was the proper thing to do, but solely because of the fact that I was not satisfied that I had the necessary authority as a representative to speak for the people of my District. But, Sir, one thing has satisfied

my mind, and that is the conclusion that I should support the recommendation, and that is this – and I want to say here publically this afternoon as being my own conviction, not for any other purpose – I am satisfied that if by any possible chance the Newfoundland Assembly had rejected the recommendations as contained in the Report, that this Colony as at the end of December would not have defaulted. It would not have been allowed to default, and I say that purely from my own observation of the Royal Commission Report, but I say this too, that while we would not have been allowed to default at the end of December, I believe in all sincerity that the Imperial Government would have picked up our interest and paid it off at that date, and then would have said to Newfoundland, “We are going to suspend your constitution by compulsion.” To constitutional lawyers this may sound a bit revolutionary, but as far as my own humble opinion is concerned, I am satisfied from a constitutional standpoint that could have been done because the Statute of Westminster had never been proclaimed, consequently we are an unsovereign people, and as such are still subject to legislation passed by the Imperial Parliament. Had that happened, it would have meant that the very generous terms as contained in the Report of to-day would be turned into a demand from the Imperial Government, and instead of our having local representation on the commission which would govern this country in the next few years, we would then have had to accept the dictates of the Imperial Parliament and be governed by whom they chose to select and send out.

That, Mr. Speaker, was the deciding factor in my mind, and that is my justification, apart altogether from the recommendation as contained in the Report. That is my justification, as a lawyer and a representative, for taking the stand and supporting the adoption of the Report as I have done within the last few days.

Now, Sir, I have very little further to add, except to say and to express the hope that the step that we are taking will prove justified by the happening of future events, for I feel that responsible government, when once gone from Newfoundland, will not be restored in the days of any of us who have the opportunity or the privilege of sitting here to-day. Because if the new form of government which is about to be instituted justifies itself, then this country will prosper, economic conditions will be restored on a sound basis, commercial conditions will be so changed that the producer will gain the benefit of his toil, that the private individual will become self-supporting and independent, and that our people as a whole will become happy and prosperous. If these conditions result from the change that is about to be instituted, then, Mr. Speaker, I say that our people will not seek the restoration of a privilege which was been found from past experience to be too great a luxury for 280,000 people to carry.

Hon. Secretary of State: Before the House adjourns I just want to say one or two words in connection with the attitude that I have taken in this House relative to the matter that we have disposed of this afternoon, for some years to come, at any rate. My attitude, Sir, has been expressed in the vote that I have given on the different questions that have been before the House in connection with the Royal Commission Report. It is a wrench, Sir, for men who have been interested in the affairs of the country since they knew what politics were, to have to give up the privilege of responsible government that has been handed down to us, and fought for before we came into the world. Any man who does not feel that it is a wrench, I do not think that he understands his

responsibility. We are giving up the greatest boon that was ever given to a free people, the right of self-government. If we are not giving it up, we are certainly asking the Mother Country to restrict [it] so that we will not be able to do damage with British institutions, as we are accused of doing in the Royal Commission Report.

I have, Sir, sat in this House for ten sessions. I have been elected under the leadership of the Hon. W. S. Monroe in 1924. Before that time I was interested in the affairs of my country. I cast my first vote in 1902, and ever since that time, before that time, from 1897, I was interested in the affairs of the country, and interested in every political election held since that time for the last fifteen years or more, twenty years. I have heard every word that was uttered in this House during that time. I have heard some sincere utterances, I have heard some insincere utterances. But I am with my colleagues when they say that most men were sincere in their utterances, that the men who were not sincere, you could count them on the fingers of your hand. The Royal Commission, Sir, says some scathing things in connection with the politics of this country as practiced by politicians, and I stand here, Sir, as one who has been accused of being a politician. I stand here as one who has been accused of trying to do everything that I could for my District. Perhaps that is why I could get elected, when those who accused me failed on election. I admit, Sir, that I have been attentive to my District. I admit that I have looked after my constituents, but it did not take the public moneys of this country for me to visit hospitals, for me to go down to my District and look after them the best way I could. Any money that I have spent has been for the benefit of my District, and for the benefit of my country. I challenge any man to say that I have ever taken a five-cent piece of the moneys of the country and put it to my own use. Any money that I have spent in my District was spent with the full authority of the government of the day, with the full authority of the Ministers of the Crown. I had no authority, and no other member had any authority, to spend money in their Districts unless it was sanctioned by the Ministers in charge of the Department.

The Royal Commission, as I say, have said some scathing things, but, Mr. Speaker, it must be remembered that the Royal Commissioners were told these things in evidence. What the Royal Commissioners have said in their Report was told them by the witnesses who went before them. These were the men who accused the politicians of being everything that was bad in Newfoundland, and not the Royal Commissioners. They were simply the mouthpiece who told the people what the evidence was before them.

Sir, in the expenditure of moneys during the last twelve years, or since 1919, we undoubtedly have spent a large sum of money, but Newfoundland could not get that money unless it was easily got from the banks and investors. They would throw money at you and try to get you to take it. The government of not only this country, but every other country, were glad to get money to expend in the country and so created a fictitious prosperity, a prosperity that was not real. Sir, the politicians could not get the money and could not spend it, unless they were encouraged to do so by the voters. I remember two years ago, when the Canadian Chamber of Commerce came here. I attended a banquet in the Newfoundland Hotel. They went back to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and they passed a resolution asking the Canadian Government to stop expenditures of money, and condemning the Canadian Government because they had spent so much money in the years that are gone. The Minister of Finance of the Canadian Government was listening. I believe it was at a banquet when the resolutions came out, and he very properly told the Boards of Trade, the Chamber of Commerce

of the Dominion of Canada, that they were the very men who asked the Canadian Government nearly at all times to spend the money, to spend the money on this, to spend the money on that, to spend the money on whatever they thought it should be spent on, forgetting that they were the very men who had to pay the piper when the tune was called.

The politicians, Sir, in this country and every other country are to blame, there is no question whatever about it. They are to blame, but the blame also must be taken by those who encouraged them, by those who clamoured for money, who wanted it spent and who did not care what happened afterward. Public wharves, public roads, everything you could mention of a public nature in St. John's and the outports were the subject of a clamour for money to put them in repair and to build new ones. These public improvements are very good for countries which can afford them, but they are not fit for us as far as Newfoundland is concerned, because Newfoundland could not afford the expenditure of money. Politicians and governments are only the voice of the people who elect them. The people themselves had the opportunity when the next election came around to punish them for their extravagance. I don't subscribe to the writings of the press when they place on politicians all the blame. The Royal Commission in the Report says that the politicians are not to blame, but the voters who get up against a man and say, "We are not going to vote for you unless you give us money for a wharf."

I remember one instance, after the Monroe government passed a measure here to give women over 25 years of age the vote. I saw a friend of mine, a lady, and I said to her, "You will have the franchise at the next election. Isn't it a great thing, you will have the franchise. We will probably have better men in public life in the future than we had in the past." "Yes, sir," she said to me, "I am going to vote at the next election, and the man I vote for will put \$20 in that hand before I will mark my ballot."

That is what the politicians were up against. Two men were in competition one with the other, and if there was no agreement between them beforehand they would canvass every house in their District, and promise all kinds of things. I never saw a man who did not make promises during an election in his District. I did hear of one in 1928, and he did not get elected. A man trying to get elected will make all sorts of promises. If he did not want to enter into competition with the other candidate, the people would soon make him enter. People who ought to know better have made demands for money during the past eighteen months, and they have given no thought as to how we were to get that money, and that from people who ought to know better. You would think the money was coming down from Heaven. As an Honourable Member has said here this afternoon, the men in this town who are loudest in berating the politicians are the very men who came with petitions wanting money to do any little thing, when they should have been glad to do it themselves.

I have voted for this measure because during the eighteen months we have been in the Government we have had a trying time, and I know what a trying time it was. I have voted for the measure because I have not seen any man who could give me an alternative. Of any man who asked me not to vote for this measure, I asked if he could give me an alternative. The alternative is this: at the end of December we shall have no money to pay for dole given out since May last. We shall owe about half a million dollars, and it cannot be paid unless we have the money. That money we have not now, and if we can't get money to pay businesses for the dole, how can we ask them to further feed the people of this country during the next twelve months? I cannot ask them to do so. The have

done all they could. They have not pressed us for money, when I know they have been hard pressed themselves to finance their business.

I could wish that some other means were found to convert our bond interest, and to give us some money for the rehabilitation of the country, and to give us some money to encourage agriculture and the fisheries, I could wish some other method had been found. I say nevertheless, we appointed a Commission, [and] we agreed to take their verdict, I can see no other alternative but to accept their report. We cannot repudiate the Report of our own Commission. The British Government cannot repudiate the Report of their Commission, and their report was that we should be relieved of responsible government for the time being in Newfoundland, until such time as we would become self-supporting. I accept the measure because I don't think there is any other alternative. I don't want to take the responsibility during the next few years of having the Newfoundland people reduced further than they are to-day to a state of starvation, because they have been in a state of semi-starvation during the past three years. I could not accept the responsibility of turning down the measure. I had to accept it, and I believe that my constituents are behind me. I have received messages from my District to the effect that there was nothing left for us to do, only to accept the inevitable. And now that the curtain is running down here, possibly for the last time as far as I am concerned, I have voted for the suspension of responsible government according to the dictates of my conscience, knowing I have done my best for my country in the past week, and with a clear conscience, knowing I have done my best for my country during the ten sessions in which I took part in this House, and I have no regrets to offer as far as that is concerned. My only regret is that I have to admit that the government for which our fathers fought and brought to us, must in our generation be admitted to have been a failure.

Mr. Speaker informed the House that he had received a Message from the Legislative Council acquainting the House of Assembly that it had passed the Bill sent up, entitled "An Act to Provide for the Issue of Certain Securities on the Credit of the Dominion, for the Postponement of Certain Securities of the Dominion, and for the Giving of Priority to Certain Other Securities Thereof" without amendment.

It was moved and seconded that when the House rises it adjourns until to-morrow, Saturday, afternoon at a quarter past three of the clock.

The House then adjourned accordingly.

Saturday, December 2, 1933

The House met a quarter past three of the clock in the afternoon pursuant to adjournment.

At half past three of the clock, the Gentlemen Usher of the Black Rod appeared at the Bar of the House with a Message from His Excellency the Governor commanding the attendance of the House in the Council Chamber.¹⁶⁵

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker and the House attended His Excellency in the Council Chamber.

Mr. Speaker at the Bar of the Council Chamber addressed His Excellency as follows:

“May It Please Your Excellency:

In the name of the House of Assembly I present the following Bill for Your Excellency’s assent.”

Whereupon His Excellency’s assent was given to the Bill, “An Act to Provide for the Issue of Certain Securities on the Credit of the Dominion, for the Postponement of Certain Securities of the Dominion, and for the Giving of Priority to Certain Other Securities Thereof.”

His Excellency was then pleased to make the following Speech to both Branches of the Legislature:

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members of the House of Assembly:

I thank you for the earnest consideration that you have given to the important matters which have come before you. The Address to His Majesty the King has been sent forward, and His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom have been informed of the legislation you have passed. Should the Parliament of the United Kingdom take the desired action, it will provide a means of relief from our financial anxiety, and I hope enable us to enter upon an era of prosperity.

In relieving you from the duties of the present Session, I pray that you may have the guidance and blessing of Divine Providence.

After which, the Honourable President of the Legislative Council, by command of His Excellency, said:

It is His Excellency’s Will and Pleasure that this General Assembly be prorogued until Wednesday, the seventeenth of January, 1934, then and here to be holden, and this General Assembly stands prorogued accordingly.

H. Y. Mott, Clerk.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, as we shall be leaving this House for some time to come, I

¹⁶⁵ “There was an unusually large attendance in the Council Chamber to witness the final scene which terminated [the] Responsible form of Government.” *Evening Telegram*, December 4, 1933.

should like to express on behalf of my colleagues, and I hope on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, our great appreciation of the manner in which you, Sir, have presided at the sessions here. You, Sir, have been courteous, gentlemanly, and impartial, and I am sure that everyone of us, not only in this House but across the country, are sorry that your career for a time at least, is going to be cut short in the parliamentary sense. I feel sure that you are a fitting son of your respected father, who I understand occupied the Chair in this House, and I am sure that the Speakership would in the ordinary course of events have been only a stepping stone to a still higher honour. Therefore, Sir, I ask you to accept on behalf of the whole House our sincere thanks and appreciation of your conduct of the affairs of this House since we assumed office.

Hon. the Speaker: Mr. Prime Minister and gentlemen of the House of Assembly, I am sure I appreciate very much the kind remarks of the Prime Minister to-day. I remember when you were good enough to do me the great honour of electing me as Speaker of this House, I expressed my fears that I would be unable to carry out the duties of a Speaker in a manner that would be satisfactory to the House. It has only been possible for me to do what little I have been able to do through the co-operation, the support, and the unfailing courtesy I have received. I would like to say before this House closes for the last time, that I wish to express my gratitude to both sides of the House for their unfailing courtesy during my brief tenure of office.

Mr. Shea: The momentous day has arrived; the conditions governing our future upon which our destiny rests have been proclaimed. While it has been impossible for some of us to glance at more than the salient features in this Report, enough have been gathered to indicate to us that the Mother Country is willing to extend generous help to facilitate rehabilitation upon our acceptance of the conditions laid down in the Report. At first blush, our Dominion is wounded, our dignity is ruffled, and a sense of humility permeates us. We feel sad when we realize that the only alternative to secure help, in this our hour of need, is the temporary abandonment, after one hundred years of self-government, our status of a self-governing Dominion, until such time as we are in a position to sustain ourselves. On the other hand, is it within the bounds of reason to expect help of so substantial a character without making some sacrifices? I do not think so, consequently no man, when he brings to mind the sufferings and deprivations, misery and impoverishment of practically a third of our people for the last three years, can, if he possesses any sense of fairness and justice, object to the conditions that will bring into operation a scheme to recover our former prosperity. We are asked to make sacrifices for the love of country, to show our patriotism in such a practical manner that our people shall cease to suffer, and willingly we make the sacrifice of all we hold dear, all that we have attained, in order that the day of relief for our beloved country and our dependent countrymen shall not be delayed.

As for some of us, we give up our representation and go out into the wilderness. The position we occupy here to-day was not attained lightly, years of attention and personal sacrifice were necessary before it was accomplished, and now on behalf of country we are asked to surrender the position we strived so hard to secure. The financial position of the country leaves us no alternative. The people cannot continue suffering as they have done in the last three years, and if the sacrifice on our part will bring about happier conditions, then we should feel that the sacrifices were not in vain.

Rachel shall cease to weep over her children, and the towel of our suspended constitution shall wipe away her tears.

The Report states that the merchants did not invest in our bonds. Those of our merchants who did not invest had no available funds to do so, as all their resources were invested in the staple industry of the country, and very often further funds were necessary, and obtained only on the security of their resources to finance the requirements of our fisheries. I am not a bondholder, yet I have sacrificed all I possessed supplying in the District I have the honour to represent. I did so willingly, not with the hope of making profits for myself, but rather to give some honest men a chance to prosecute the fisheries, bring wealth to the country, and make a living for themselves. We have learned that honesty does not always pay accounts, and supplying for the fisheries is a more hazardous investment than buying bonds. I feel that I am justified in referring to that particular section of the Report, and to say further that since I became a Member of this Honourable Assembly, I have never used a free ticket going through my District on public business. I have paid out of my own pocket all postal charges in answering the numerous correspondence of my District for the first ten months; as far as I was concerned, it was pay, pay, until I could pay no more. If any man can lay claim to sacrifice on account of entering public office, he cannot lay claim to any greater sacrifice than I can.

Mr. Speaker, in a very short time responsible government will be but a memory, but let us keep its memory green, we are bound to do this in honour of the struggle of our forefathers for independence, for self-government, for self-control, and when the time comes to take our place among the self-governing dominions of the Empire, may all the undesirable practices that crept into public life the last number of years be forgotten, and that men imbued only with love of country, and concerned solely with the success of the people, will be selected by the people to govern us.

To-day the people are more interested in the relief of our deplorable financial circumstances than they are in form of government. It does not matter much to the ordinary citizen who governs, as long as he can secure employment and be enabled to support his dependents in a decent manner with some share of his rightful happiness. Therefore some of us who have not suffered as they have suffered, must forget for the time being our pride in self-government, disrobe ourselves of the dignity of Dominion, and feel exalted in our humility that our sacrifices shall result in happier conditions for the people. The Mother Country has promised help, and the Mother Country shall keep its promise. The economic recovery of our people is far more important to us than the status of self-government.

After the adjournment of the House of Assembly, the members met in the Speaker's Room, where the Prime Minister paid a glowing tribute to Mr. Alex Winter for the dignified manner in which he conducted the onerous duties of Speaker of the House. [*Evening Telegram*, December 4, 1933]

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