# NEWFOUNDLAND'S NATIONAL CONVENTION, 1946-48

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# NEWFOUNDLAND'S NATIONAL CONVENTION, 1946-48

By

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## Abstract

On 11 December 1945 the British government announced that a representative body of Newfoundlanders would be elected to debate Newfoundland's political future, and make recommendations as to the constitutional options that would be placed before the people in a national referendum. This National Convention sat between September 1946 and January 1948. It prepared reports on aspects of the Newfoundland economy and society, and debated various constitutional options. Shortly after the Convention assembled it split into two factions on the confederation issue, and the investigative role was subsumed by partisan fighting. The responsible government faction sent a delegation to London in an attempt to ensure continued British aid under responsible government. The confederates, for their part, sent a delegation to Ottawa, and succeeded in negotiating terms of union. When the Convention met in the fall of 1947 the responsible government faction made their case based upon the Convention's finance committee report. The confederates based their case upon the data obtained in Ottawa, and took advantage of the broadcast of the proceedings to publicize the advantages of union. Eventually the Convention recommended two options, responsible government and commission government, be placed on the ballot. The British rejected this recommendation, and included confederation as an option.

On the basis of this rejection many historians have concluded that the Convention had little importance beyond giving J.R. Smallwood a platform from which to popularize confederation. This thesis demonstrates that the National Convention had a crucial role in heightening awareness of the constitutional options, and influenced the outcome of the referendum. In fact, the Convention made confederation an option, and popularized it. As such, it was an indispensable part of the confederation debate, without which Canadian and British plans would have come to nought.

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## Preface

Much of what has been written on the political history of Newfoundland during the Commission of Government period has been concerned with the events leading to union with Canada in 1949. For a long time after confederation the historical interpretation was formulated by the victors, principally Joseph R. Smallwood. Through public speeches and an edited selection of political memoirs published in *The Book of Newfoundland*, Smallwood ensured that history would view him favourably by writing it himself.[1] He continued to shape the interpretation of the past with his autobiography, *I Chose Canada*, and through his interviews with Richard Gwyn which largely formed the basis of the latter's *Smallwood : The Unlikely Revolutionary*.[2] These works describe in heroic terms Smallwood's almost single handed battle to bring about Newfoundland's union with Canada. Even the vanquished have collabrated in this interpretation; Donald Jamieson, for instance, a proponent of economic union with the United States, gives much of the credit for confederation to Smallwood.[3] Participants like Peter Cashin, the leading anti-confederate, Harold Horwood, a confederate campaigner, and Geoffrey St. John Chadwick, a Dominions Office official, and non-participants such as W. Eggleston and S.J.R. Noel, elaborated on local aspects of the confederation debate, but did not question Smallwood's view of

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[1]William Keough, "We Knew What We Wanted"; J.W. Pickersgill, "My Part in Newfoundland's Confederation"; Peter Cashin "My Fight for Responsible Government"; and William Browne "The Case for the Return of Responsible Government." in ed. Joseph R. Smallwood, *The Book of Newfoundland* (St. John's : Newfoundland Book Publishers (1967) Ltd., 1967) Vol. 3.

[2]Joseph R. Smallwood, *I Chose Canada* (Toronto : MacMillan of Canada, 1973) and Richard Gwyn, *Smallwood : The Unlikely Revolutionary* (Toronto : McClelland and Stewart, 1968 and revised 1971).

[3]Donald Jamieson, "I saw the fight for Confederation" in Smallwood (ed.), *The Book of Newfoundland*, Vol. 3.

what was, and was not, important.[4]

Recently, historians gained access to government records in Britain and Canada, and have begun to examine a new aspect of confederation, namely the effect that the British and Canadian governments had on the debate. For the most part, they have not questioned Smallwood's version of events in Newfoundland, but have elaborated on the international context of confederation. This scholarly work has been written from two perspectives, largely a function of the two separate bodies of material available for examination. Peter Neary and Philip McCann, for example, have relied heavily on the Dominions Office material in the Public Record Office.[5] The picture they paint is one of British action in determining the options debated, and in creating the conditions whereby Britain's prefered alternative, union with Canada, was most likely to be accepted by the Newfoundland people. David Mackenzie and Paul Bridle have made almost exclusive use of material from the Canadian Department of External Affairs now housed in the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa.[6] They deal with the development of Canadian policy towards Newfoundland, and the actions of the Department of External Affairs to encourage Newfoundlanders to chose federal union. Though the chronology and causality are largely the same for both pairs

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[4]Peter Cashin, Harold Horwood, and Leslie Harris, "Newfoundland and Confederation, 1948-49," *Regionalism in the Canadian Community, 1867-1967*, ed. Mason Wade (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1969); Wilfred Eggleston, *Newfoundland : The Road to Confederation* (Ottawa : Government of Canada, 1974); and S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1971).

[5]Peter Neary, "Newfoundland's Union with Canada, 1949 : Conspiracy or Choice ?" in *Acadiensis*, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1983, pp.110-119; Peter Neary, "Clement Attlee's Visit to Newfoundland September 1942," in *Acadiensis*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1984, pp.101-109; Peter Neary "Great Britain and the Future of Newfoundland, 1939-45" in *Newfoundland Studies*, Vol. I, No. I, 1985, pp.29-56; and Philip McCann, "Confederation Revisited : New Light on British Policy" Lecture presented to the Newfoundland Historical Society, 13 January 1983, manuscript in the Center for Newfoundland Studies (CNS) Q.E. II Library, MUN.

[6]David C. Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle : Canada and the Entrance of Newfoundland into Confederation, 1939-49* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1986); and *Documents on Relations Between Canada and Newfoundland* ed. Paul Bridle (Ottawa : Department of External Affairs, 1984), Volume 2.

of scholars, they do not add significantly to our understanding of what happened in Newfoundland.

A result of the lack of scholarly work on the particular Newfoundland dimension is that some important aspects of the period have not been critieally examined. One such aspect is the National Convention. This democratically elected, geographically representative body was unique in the British empire. It had an advisory and investigative role, but no constitutional authority. Ultimately, its advice was not followed by the British government, adding credence to the view that it had little importance beyond giving J.R. Smallwood a platform from which to popularize union with Canada. David Mackenzie, for example, concluded that

> The National Convention had been a curious exercise. Despite its espousal of democracy and the excitement and interest it provoked, it had, in the final analysis, proved itself to be virtually ineffective.[7]

This thesis will demonstrate that the National Convention did have an important role in heightening the awareness of constitutional options, and did influence the outcome of the referenda. In fact, despite its formal recommendation, the Convention made confederation an option, and popularized it. As such, it was an indispensible part of the confederation debate, without which Canadian and British plans would have come to nought.

This thesis attempts to examine the National Convention and its role in the confederation debate. It will show how events in the 1930s, and the Dominions Office pledge to return self government, led to the creation of the Convention, and how British policy aims dictated its form. British and Canadian efforts to influence the debate will be examined, and it will be shown how they facilitated the discussion of confederation. The thesis will explain how the Convention came to be divided into two factions, thus hampering its investigative role. Finally, it will show how the Convention led to the confederation debate, and was crucial in

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[7] Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*, p.194.

that debate's resolution. It will not attempt to describe British and Canadian efforts to bring about confederation, nor to provide a history of Newfoundland's entry into confederation. The former has been accomplished by others, and much remains to be written about aspects of the confederation debate before the second can be attempted.[8] It is hoped that this thesis provides a starting point for an understanding of Newfoundland's decision to become a province of Canada.

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[8]For British and Canadian policy see Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle;* and Neary, "Great Britain and the Future of Newfoundland, 1939-45."

# Chapter 1

## Origin of the National Convention

The origin of the National Convention lay in the creation of the Commission Government in 1934. This temporary measure included a pledge to return self-government, but no provisions were made for when or how. Pressure to end the Commission from within and without Newfoundland continued to mount. Over the succeeding 11 years the Dominions Office sought a permanent solution to the problem of Newfoundland, eventually deciding on union with Canada. To achieve this, while living up to the letter of the pledge made in 1934, the Dominions Office created the National Convention, and planned a referendum.

The Newfoundland government entered the depression bearing a large debt, chiefly the result of building and operating a transinsular railway and fighting World War 1. The contraction of world trade that resulted from the depression lowered fish prices at the same time that currency values and other factors were beginning to favor Newfoundland's competitors.[1] The government's expenditure on poor relief continued to mount, while its revenues from customs duties declined. By 1933 the total debt had reached $100 million and interest charges amounted to 65 per cent of the government's revenue.[2] Unable to deal with an impending financial crisis, the Newfoundland government, in December 1932, accepted a British loan and the proposal that a Royal Commission be appointed to make recommendations on Newfoundland's future.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Sir Montagu Norman, informed British Labour peer Lord Amulree, the chairman of the Royal Commission, in March 1933, that default by Newfoundland was unacceptable since it would

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[1] Great Britain, Parliament, *Parliamentary Debates (Lords)*, Vol.90, No.14, Col.661, 19 December 1933. Hereafter cited as *Parliamentary Debates (Lords)*.

[2] R.A. Mackay, *Newfoundland : Economic, Diplomatic and Strategic Studies* (Toronto : Oxford University Press, 1946), p.193.

seriously harm the credit of the entire empire. It seemed obvious to Norman that Britain would have to give financial aid to Newfoundland to prevent default. But such aid would only be palatable to Parliament if the British Treasury assumed control of Newfoundland's financial affairs.[3] The Royal Commission held *in camera* hearings in Newfoundland and Canada during the spring of 1933. The vast majority of those giving testimony before the Commission described a corrupt and inefficient political system, and recommended the suspension of democratic government[4] and the appointment of a commission government.[5] In August, a Treasury official, R.N.V. Hopkins, elaborated on Norman's decisions. He devised a plan whereby Britain would reschedule and guarantee the debt and a commission of government would be appointed to administer Newfoundland.[6] The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Neville Chamberlain, put this scheme to Amulree on 31 August, suggesting that Amulree convince Newfoundland Prime Minister Frederick Alderdice to go along with the plan without an election. Amulree agreed to do so, on condition that Newfoundland be offered an early return to self-government.[7] With the evidence from Newfoundland gathered, and the decision in Britain made, Amulree and his secretary Alexander Clutterbuck

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[3]Bank of England, G/1/375, "Points mentioned to Lord Amulree at interview at the bank, 1 March 1933". I am indebted to Dr. James K. Hiller for making his notes of this material available to me.

[4]This despair about the capacity of a democratic government to solve its problems was likely due to a number of factors : the failure of past governments to solve the islands endemic economic problems, the extreme poverty which had accompanied the depression, and the scathing indictment of Newfoundland's political morality by the Hollis Walker enquiry into political corruption. See Rosalie M. Elliott, "Newfoundland Politics in the 1920's : The Genesis and Significance of the Hollis Walker Enquiry," *Newfoundland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries : Essays in Interpretation*, eds. James Hiller and Peter Neary (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1980), p.181-204.

[5]Peter Fenwick, "Witnesses to the Lord : An analysis of the testimony presented to the Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933, Lord Amulree, Chairman", Unpublished manuscript in CNS, 1984.

[6]Bank of England, G/1/376, Memo by Hopkins on Newfoundland Affairs.

[7]*Ibid.*, Chamberlain to Amulree, 31 August 1933.

set about writing the report to justify the action to be taken.[8] The report attributed Newfoundland's difficulties to "reckless waste and extravagance" and an "absence of constructive and efficient administration."[9] It blamed the situation on the political system which had been, in their view, "abused and exploited for personal or party ends."[10] The Amulree Commission concluded that a radical change of regime offered the only hope of recovery.[11] The report therefore suggested the suspension of responsible government and the appointment of a commission of government to administer Newfoundland. The report went on to recommend that "as soon as the island's difficulties are overcome and Newfoundland is again self supporting, responsible government, on request from the people of Newfoundland, would be restored."[12] The report was widely disseminated, and quickly accepted by a large part of the Newfoundland public as well as the Newfoundland government. The Newfoundland legislature asked for the acceptance of the Amulree recommendations, and the British government quickly prepared the necessary legislation. This bill, which became known as the Newfoundland Act 1933, provided for a six person appointed commission to administer Newfoundland's affairs.

The principal flaw in the act was the lack of a specific provision for the return of responsible government. This did not go unnoticed in Britain. Several opposition members argued that a time limit should be placed on the Commission of Government. Labour M.P. Sir Stafford Cripps maintained that a three-year

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[8] Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, (1897-1975), Secretary to Amulree Commission 1933, Assistant Secretary in Dominions Office 1940-42, Assistant Undersecretary of State Dominions Affairs 1942-46, High Commissioner to Canada 1946-52.

[9] Great Britain, *Royal Commission on Newfoundland 1933*, (Amulree Report) cmd. 4480, p.192.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*, p.197.

[12] *Ibid.*

time limit should be placed on the Commission to ensure that Newfoundlanders remained politically aware, and thus better able to "guide their own destinies" when responsible government was returned.[13] Some opposition members also expressed concern that the bill provided no instrument for the people of Newfoundland to ask for the return of responsible government. As one member, Morgan Jones, put it

> As I see the position, there will be no machine of government. There will be no vocal expression of the opinion or desires of the people of Newfoundland, no elected assembly, and no organization. How does the Right Honorable Gentleman propose to ascertain the mind and the will of the people of Newfoundland until in their opinion, the time has come for this state of affairs to be brought to an end? What sort of expression of opinion will be acceptable by the Right Honorable Gentleman to bring it to an end?[14]

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, J.H. Thomas, replied that since no one knew when Newfoundland would be self-supporting again, "It is no good making promises about plebiscites or periods of time."[15] He went on to say that, in the government's view, the meaning of "self-supporting" and the mechanism by which the Newfoundland people would make their request for the return of self-government were very difficult to address in the bill. The bill was intended to deal with a very specific immediate situation, and the government promised to "go very carefully into the question [of the return of responsible government] in an endeavor to work it out"; furthermore, "it will have to be very carefully considered in the future."[16] The bill was passed, royal assent given, and new letters patent were issued, creating the Commission of Government as of 16

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[13] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 5 series, Vol. 284, No.18, col.565-567, 14 December 1933.

[14] *Ibid.*, col.592.

[15] *Ibid.*, col. 587.

[16] *Ibid.*, col.939-940, 18 December 1933.

February 1934.[17] Though it seems clear that Parliament intended the act to be temporary, expediency and the difficulties of committing itself in light of an uncertain future led to the questions of how and when Newfoundland would regain self government not being addressed.[18]

Though Newfoundland remained nominally a dominion, in practice it reverted to something closely approximating a crown colony. The Dominions Office continued to be responsible for the island, despite the fact that its constitution shared more with the colonies than the dominions. Thus, Newfoundland's form of government and place in imperial policy were unique. Administration of the island passed to six appointed commissioners, three from Britain and three from Newfoundland. The British commissioners assumed control over the departments of Finance, Public Utilities and Natural Resources, while the three from Newfoundland assumed control over Justice, Public Health and Welfare, and Home Affairs and Education. The governor, also appointed from Britain, acted as chairman of the Commission, and voted in cases of a tie. While debating the Newfoundland Act in the House of Commons, the Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Malcolm MacDonald, indicated that the intention was not only the provision of good government, but also the political training, education, and development of the Newfoundland people.[19] Yet once the new regime became established it did little to prepare the people for the return of democracy.

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[17] In an effort to reassure Parliament that commission government was to be a temporary measure the House of Lords amended the act so that it made provision for the "suspension of the operation of the letters patent" instead of the revocation of the letters patent. See *Parliamentary Debates,(Lords)*, Vol.90, No.15, col. 678, 20 December 1933.

[18] Despite some public criticism in Newfoundland, and the printing of the House of Commons debates in the *Evening Telegram*, there seems to have been only a small amount of concern in Newfoundland that these questions had not been answered. A more definite statement on the question of opposition to the relinquishment of responsible government requires further research.

[19] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 5 series, Vol. 284, No. 16, col. 306, 12 December 1933.

For a brief period after coming to power in February 1934, the Commission enjoyed almost total public support. Nevertheless there was concern in the Dominions Office about the perceived legitimacy of the new regime. Under responsible government the members of the Assembly had been the principal means of communication between the government and the people. Thus the Commission inherently lacked any means of relating to the people of Newfoundland. To solve this problem, the Commission adopted a district commissioner system similar to that in the colonial empire.[20] The Newfoundland Constabulary, the new Ranger Force and the reformed magistracy were to operate as conduits of information between the Commission and the people, as well as administer government services in the outports.[21] This failed to work effectively, and people who had been used to making demands on the political system found the channels to influence government closed.

The Commission was aware of the absence of channels for the public to express their opinion, and was extremely sensitive to criticism that it was not responsible to the people. Thomas Lodge, the Commissioner of Public Utilities, reported that it was impressed upon him that one of the British Commissioners' main duties was "convincing the public of Newfoundland that their Newfoundland colleagues played an equal, if not a decisive, part in the government of the country."[22] The Commission also attempted to solidify its position by establishing control over broadcasting in September 1934.[23] Lodge suggested that once control had been established "all political discussion should be

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[20]Marilyn Tuck "The Newfoundland Ranger Force, 1935-1950" (unpublished MA thesis, MUN, 1983), p.47-48.

[21]*Ibid.*, p.49-50.

[22]Thomas Lodge, *Dictatorship in Newfoundland* (London : Cassell and Co., 1939), p.2.

[23]The two largest radio stations were to be amalgamated and the licenses of the others canceled. A committee appointed by the government would then oversee all programming. See Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), GN 38 S7-1-1 File 1, Memorandum on Government control of broadcasting, 29 September 1934.

barred."[24] The plan took quite some time to bring to fruition, but by 1938, with the formation of the Broadcast Corporation of Newfoundland (BCN), the government had successfully assumed control.[25] This did not go uncriticized. The head of the Fisherman's Protective Union, Kenneth Brown, publicly attacked the "dictatorship" for using VONF as a propaganda tool, not for the benefit of the people.[26] However, despite its sweeping administrative reforms, the Commission was unable to solve Newfoundland's endemic poverty. As the depression continued, the public became disillusioned with a government that they perceived as being remote and indifferent. On the part of some people this disillusionment took the form of demands for some form of representation in the government.

There had been organized groups of the unemployed for several years. In fact, the unemployed had taken an active part in the demise of the Squires government in 1932. It is therefore hardly surprising that an organized body of unemployed began to pressure the new Commission government for increased relief and, more importantly, work. The Commission was unable to find employment for many of these people, and could increase relief only marginally. With the onset of winter, and the accompanying rise in the number of relief recipients, the Commission began to fear a repeat of the 1932 riot. Their first measures were to arrange for a census to evaluate the size of the problem, and to increase the size of the police force to handle any violence.[27] They also kept the activities of the group under police surveillance.[28] The government received

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[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Philip Hiscock "The BCN : A Short History" Finding aid for the Galgay Papers in CNS, p.1.

[26] MUNFLA Disc DC210B (=Tape PAC 137), Speech of Kenneth Brown, 29 April 1939.

[27] PANL, GN 38 S-1-1-1, Minutes of Commission of Government, 7 and 10 August 1934.

[28] See PANL, GN 1/13, I am indebted to Dr. James Overton for allowing me to borrow photocopies of some of this material.

deputations from the group, but did little to answer their demands. As the winter wore on, and conditions worsened, the unemployed continued to have regular meetings. They regularly marched on the Colonial Building, the seat of government, protesting "dole flour" and the requirement that they cash their relief orders in specific stores.[29] Tensions between the unemployed and the police, and the fears of the Commission, continued to mount.[30] Frequent standoffs between the police and unemployed took place, yet the Commission carefully avoided any "drastic action" that would prove embarrassing to the crown.[31] Despite their lack of success in gaining concessions from the Commission, the unemployed increased their demands.[32] Shortly after the jubilee, the unemployed once more petitioned the Commission.[33] This time, when on 10 May 1935, the unemployed marched on the Colonial Building to protest the

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[29]The Commission had made vitamin rich brown flour mandatory for relief recipients as a way of improving the nutrition of Newfoundlanders. Not only was the taste of this "dole flour" unpopular, but the darker loaf was a social stigma.

[30]*Daily News*, 12 January 1935.

[31]PANL, GN 38 S-1-2-6, File U-V, Report on telegram to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 11 May 1935.

[32]*Daily News*, 27 February 1935.

[33]This time the committee wanted recognition as representing the unemployed, the government's acceptance of a list of men needing work, and the divorce of the administration of road work from the relief department. The Commission refused to grant recognition to the group, and insisted that road work must remain in the control of the Department of Public Works. Perceiving that to accept a list of men needing work would be to relinquish control over a portion of its jurisdiction, the government informed those wanting jobs to apply to the police. The police would then prepare a list of those suitable for work. See PANL, GN 38, S1-2-6, File U-V, Evidence Prepared for Magistrates Court, 18 May 1935.

rejection of their demands, a violent confrontation occurred.[34] Several arrests were made, and the governor reported that the "display of force on this occasion after long forbearance will in the Commission's unanimous opinion have excellent sedative effect."[35] Though the unemployed continued to meet and protest conditions, they seem never to have recovered the momentum they had prior to the riot.

The Commission had not perceived the unemployed group as an expression of the poverty and disenchantment of the chronic unemployed. Rather they were seen as being led by "five professional agitators" who were being exploited by "disgruntled political influence."[36] The disgruntled political element that the Commission feared had a name, Sir Richard Squires. The former Newfoundland Prime Minister had been resurrected from political death once before, and the prospect of a third coming was not appealing. Not only were the unemployed causing trouble that winter, but as it became clear that the Commission was not the panacea promised by Amulree, uncertainty and disappointment spread among the general population.[37] To the paranoid Commission, this was evidence that Squires' secret campaign was having an effect.[38] The Commission feared Squires

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[34]As the police were pushing the unemployed off the steps, a rock was thrown at the building by someone in the crowd. A large number of police then arrived from the side of the building and charged the crowd with batons drawn. A wild scramble ensued as the police cleared the grounds and street. The unemployed then decided to scatter and meet again at Beck's Cove that night. The crowd assembled at eight o'clock and, after listening to a member of the leadership, George Wilkinson, appeal an end to violence, rushed down Water Street smashing windows. The police met them at Springdale Street, and by eleven o'clock the disturbance was over. *See Evening Telegram*, 11 May 1935.

[35]PANL, GN 38 S-1-2-6, File U-V, Report on Telegram to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 11 May 1935.

[36]*Ibid.*

[37]Public Record Office (PRO), DO 35/504/N105/11, Clipping from the *Times*, 9 September 1935.

[38]PANL, GN 38 S-1-2-6, File U-V, Report on Telegram to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs from Commission, 11 May 1935.

enough to have both regular Constabulary and undercover informants keep track of his movements. The extent of the Commission's fears is also illustrated by their having constructed an elaborate scenario of how Squires would take over.

> [Squires will most likely] continue for a while to ferment disaffection by the underground methods of which he was a master with a view to it boiling over during the winter in a series of riots on a grand scale. An orgy of window smashing, looting of food shops, police charges and general disturbances, ostensibly aimed against the "Dictatorship" would be calculated...to impress public opinion in England and Sir R. Squires was probably counting on staged agitation of this sort to weaken the position of the government within and without. When he judged the time ripe, he would come forward, most reluctantly and in the most lamb-like manner, pay a glowing tribute to the work of the Commission but say that the people had shown that they would never be content without responsible government, and after all the budget was not very far from balancing, so couldn't they be allowed to take over their own affairs again?[39]

One of the strategies the Commission used to deal with this threat, and "deprive Sir Richard Squires of his chief weapon", was to move some of the the unemployed out of St. John's into small dispersed agricultural communities.[40] This "Land Settlement Scheme" was one of the largest elements in the Commission's reconstruction program. The government hoped that it would not only remove some of the unemployed from St. John's, but reform Newfoundland society.[41] Though there is no evidence that Squires had caused the rioting of the unemployed, he was not innocent of making trouble for the Commission. In a public speech during the summer of 1936 Squires "compared unfavourably the political status of Newfoundlanders with that of coloured British citizens."[42] Lodge confided to the governor that "the sting in his speech is that it is true and

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[39]PRO, DO 35/500/N1029/9, Note of a talk with Mr. Dunn, 1 October 1935.

[40]*Ibid.*

[41]W. Gordon Handcock, "The Origin and Development of Commission of Government Land Settlements in Newfoundland, 1934-1969" (unpublished MA thesis, MUN, 1970).

[42]PRO, DO 35/504/N1051/21/6-9, Lodge to Walwyn, 11 July 1936.

that an academic justification for the continuance of a state of affairs in which a *wholly white population has no element of representation in its governing body is* extraordinarily difficult to frame."[43] Squires had also sent a Christmas card with a pious note to each elector, a device which was reported to have been successful in convincing many people he was a martyr.[44] Newfoundland Constabulary informants continued to report on Squires throughout the depression. Summaries of his public speeches were submitted, and reports were made on his contacts with others who opposed the government. In February 1937, for example, he reportedly made thinly veiled anti-Commission speeches in St. John's and several places in Conception Bay.[45] It was also reported, in 1938, that Squires and his old ally Dr. Alexander Campbell intended to make a representation "on matters pertaining to government" to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.[46] Lodge thought that an elected advisory council might help to quiet the discontent, but in light of "the complete absence of any intelligent body of local opinion" he doubted it would make any real contribution to the island's reconstruction.[47]

Despite reports that in some people's opinion Squires could be re-elected, the perception of Mr. Hale, a British official, was that the discontent was only the result of "the natural Irish tendency to be 'agin the government'."[48] "However," Hale continued, "the Commission cannot afford to ship any unnecessary water."[49] With these concerns in mind the Dominions Office, in October 1936,

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[43] *Ibid.*, p.1.

[44] PRO, DO 35/504/N1057/26, Note on a visit of Mr. Hale (Treasury?).

[45] PANL, GN 1/13, Box 135 File 74, "Secret Observations", February 8 and 15 1937.

[46] Dr. Campbell had been the Minister of Agriculture in the Squires Government. He had been implicated along with Squires by the Hollis Walker inquiry in a conspiracy to misappropriate government funds. See also PANL, GN 1/13 Box 233, "Newfoundland Affairs", 22 August 1938.

[47] PRO, DO 35/504/N1051/21/6-9, Lodge to Walwyn, 11 July 1936.

[48] PRO, DO 35/504/N1057/26, Note on a visit of Mr. Hale (Treasury?).

[49] *Ibid.*

recommended an elected advisory council. The Commission seriously considered the establishment of such a council, but feared that any elected body would question the Commission's legitimacy. When the Commissioner of Finance, E.N.R. Trentham, asked about the constitutional relationship between the Commission and the council, and mentioned the danger of Squires being elected to it, the Commission decided against it.[50] The Commission's reply to the Dominion Office's proposal was "that the admitted value and usefulness of such a council would be completely outweighed by the difficulties and dangers"[51] Rather than introduce a measure of democracy, the Commission sought to make itself closer to the people by using the media to promote its plans, and continuing to have the magistrates report on public opinion.[52] The other strategy was to encourage the growth of local government. Yet any elected assembly was a potential source of opposition that had a greater claim on legitimacy than the appointed Commission. Thus, it feared the very thing to which it was committed. For example, in 1936, the people of Belleoram, Fortune Bay, asked if they could form some sort of elected advisory council or local government. They were willing to have the Commission dictate all of the terms and powers, and promised not to become "a mere mouthpiece for the community to voice criticisms and protests."[53] The Commission denied recognition to the group. Similar proposals had been received from other communities, the Commission said, and they had been turned down as well.[54]

Yet the unemployed group and Squires were not the only Newfoundlanders

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[50]Susan McCorquodale, "Public Administration in Newfoundland During the Period of Commission of Government.", (unpublished PhD dissertation, Queen's University, 1973), p. 140-141.

[51]PANL, GN 38 S-1-1-2, Minutes of Commission of Government, 7 December 1936.

[52]*Ibid.*

[53]PANL, GN 38 S-1-2-6, W.H. Rompkey to Commission, 4 February 1936.

[54]PANL, GN 38 S-1-2-6, Commission to W.H. Rompkey, 7 March 1936.

opposing the Commission. A secret society called "The Crusaders" seems to have been actively criticizing the Commission during 1936. Police informant reports indicate that ex-MHA Major Peter Cashin headed this group which consisted of several "long-time agitators".[55] Cashin had also engaged in public meetings and made radio broadcasts criticizing the Commission.[56] The other executive members of the Crusaders were Dorman Elliott, a man who had been involved in the fish business and was a well known "agitator in the under current", and ex-magistrate E.J. Wornell.[57] This group seems to have dissolved sometime in 1936.

In January 1937 Elliott and Wornell became involved with sometime socialist and jack-of-all-trades J.R. Smallwood, and Reuben Vardy, an ex-justice of the peace, and failed merchant and sawmill operator.[58] Under the leadership of Vardy, these and other men formed the Newfoundland Independence Association. The Commission feared influential people were behind Vardy, and kept his activities under "the constant attention of the police."[59] A Water Street office was opened, and Vardy set about trying to gather support for his efforts to "secure for Newfoundland, Responsible Government" and give "Newfoundlanders a career in Newfoundland."[60] On 5 March 1937 a meeting of the Newfoundland Independence Association was held in the Mechanics Hall.[61] Some 700 people attended, and passed a resolution condemning the Commission and asking for a return of responsible government, or responsible government with financial

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[55]PANL, GN 1/13 Box 135 File 74, "Secret Observations", 4 February 1937.

[56]See CNS, Galgay Papers.

[57]PANL, GN 1/13 Box 135 File 74, "Secret Observations", 4 February 1937.

[58]*Ibid.*

[59]*Ibid.*, 18 February 1937.

[60]Reuben Vardy, "Comrades Shun". (St. John's : n.p., 1937).

[61]The meeting was timed to take advantage of the presence of the large number of men in St. John's for the annual seal hunt.

control vested in an imperial official, or at least the holding of a plebiscite on the issue. In the interim they asked for a Newfoundlander to be appointed to the Commission to act as liaison between the government and the people.[62] Since "no men of standing have yet publicly come forward", the Commission informed the Dominions Office, that nothing needed be done about this petition.[63] Vardy and the Newfoundland Independence Association continued to meet during the spring of 1937. They attempted to circulate pamphlets and petitions, and protested the government's refusal to recognize the movement. All of this was to no avail and the group dissolved.

The Commission recognized in March 1937, that there had been during the previous "six months or more a gradually increasing movement of public opinion against Commission of Government."[64] This was attributed to the non-realization of high hopes raised by the Amulree report, as well as the disappointment of would-be politicians at the interruption of their careers.[65] The Commission maintained:

> There is ...an ever present consciousness of the fact that the people of Newfoundland have no constitutional opportunities for assisting in the shaping of policy, which finds expression from time to time in a demand for an advisory council. ...we wish to reaffirm our conviction that the creation of such a body would do little or nothing to reconcile the leaders of public opinion to the loss of responsible government.[66]

The Commissioner of Natural Resources, Sir John Hope Simpson, stated in March of 1937, that given the expense of an independent government, it would be ridiculous for a place with as small a population as Newfoundland to be a

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[62] *Daily News*, 6 March 1937.

[63] PRO, DO 35/723/N2/7/22-27, Governor to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 15 March 1937.

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] *Ibid.*

dominion. What was needed, he said, was a method of gauging the reactions of the people to the actions of the Commission. He felt that if this could be found, the Commission might well be permanent.[67]

Another group, the Newfoundland Public Welfare League, rose to take the Newfoundland Independence Association's place in 1938. The group was headed by Bernard Lilly, and included not only some St. John's "agitators", among them Wornell, but several merchants, most notably Chesley Crosbie.[68] Meetings were held at the Majestic Theater, and efforts were made to organize a demonstration with the unemployed.[69] A petition was prepared and circulated which demanded, on the grounds that the Newfoundland people had not been consulted in 1933 and that the Commission had failed to accomplish very much, that a progressive policy be instituted and responsible government be returned with the same financial aid that the Commission enjoyed.[70] Once again the demands of the group were ignored. Eventually, the group dissolved.

Late in 1938 the opposition crystallized when the Commission failed to negotiate the building of a paper mill on the Gander River. Newfoundland governments had been endeavouring to have such a mill built since the 1920s, to no avail. Bowaters, who owned the Corner Brook mill, gained the timber rights to the Gander watershed, and by September 1938 pressured the Commission into relieving them of their obligation to build a new mill.[71] This brought an unprecedented amount of criticism upon the Commission. The Board of Trade,

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[67]Hope Simpson to *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 March 1937 in anonymous newspaper clipping collection in CNS.

[68]PANL, GN 1/13 Box 233, "Newfoundland Affairs", August 12 and 26 1938.

[69]*Ibid.*

[70]*Ibid.*, 22 August 1938.

[71]James Hiller, "Newsprint Politics : The Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Industry, 1915-1939" (unpublished draft paper, 1986), p.29.

the trade unions, the St. John's Municipal Council, and service groups all condemned the Commission. Nearly 40 petitions from rural Newfoundland were presented, as well as a large number of private letters.[72] With the "Gander Deal" came the first united opposition to the Commission from all classes and areas.

In December 1938 the Newfoundland Commissioners met with Dominions Office officials to review Newfoundland's constitutional position. They agreed that the Commission would have to last at least twenty five years for self sufficiency to be restored, but feared it might not last that long considering the opposition in Newfoundland. The Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald, stated that he had:

> always held the view that as things improved there would be increasing pressure for the restoration of responsible government. Such pressure would be only natural and proper, but the danger was that premature pressure of this kind should upset the reconstruction policy. It was essential that means should be devised to overcome this danger...it was for this reason that he had suggested that the Commission should consider the question of an elected advisory council. He now wished to say however that, as a result of the correspondence which had taken place...he fully accepted the view that the formation of such a council in present circumstances would be likely to be more of an embarrassment than a help.[73]

At a later meeting, the commissioners and the Dominions Office officials continued to wonder how long the political situation could be held. They feared that, despite the Commission's efforts, the opposition might rise to the point where it could not be resisted. The Commission was instructed to try to delay the deterioration of the political situation by improving the range of services offered to the people.[74] It was also agreed that the Commission's reconstruction program

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[72] McCorquodale, "Public Administration in Newfoundland," p. 226.

[73] PANL, GN 1/13 Box 233, Summary of Discussion between Newfoundland Commissioners and Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 22 December 1938.

[74] *Ibid.*, 11 January 1939.

and expenditures should be so regulated that the budget could be balanced at short notice if the political situation deteriorated to the point where the Commission had to be prematurely brought to an end.[75]

Demands for constitutional revision continued to increase during 1939. The former Commissioner of Public Utilities, Thomas Lodge, frustrated by his disagreements with the other Commissioners and the Dominions Office, which he perceived as being short-sighted, published a scathing critique of the Commission.[76] He suggested that the Commission was ineffective, and should be modified to make it more responsive to public opinion, or more independent of the Dominions Office. Lodge felt the Commission needed an intelligent, capable leader to take control of the government. Unimpeded by narrow-minded civil servants and political interference, this person could then bring about the reconstruction of Newfoundland.[77] As well as that by Lodge, another published critique of the Commission suggested that an advisory council was needed to make the Commission more responsive to public opinion, and thus more effective.[78] In August the long-time politician and lawyer A.B. Morine returned from Toronto to make a public speech accusing the Commission of being a mistake and a failure. The occasion was used to launch a new committee to work for the return of responsible government. Former Prime Minister W.S. Monroe, Legislative Council Member M.P. Gibbs, former Assembly Member Jessie Whiteway, and two merchants, Chesley Crosbie and J.M Devine, formed the basis of the committee.[79] This group consisted of many of the "men of standing" that the Commission feared would one day come forward. If the war had not

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[75] *Ibid.*

[76] Lodge, *Dictatorship in Newfoundland.*

[77] *Ibid.*, p.258.

[78] *The Round Table*, (London : Macmillan and Co Ltd., 1939), No. 116, September 1939.

[79] John R. Courage, "Newfoundland : A Country in Search of a Government.", unpublished manuscript in CNS, p.190-191.

intervened this group might have had some success in winning concessions from Britain. However, when Britain declared war, Newfoundland automatically entered World War Two. Wartime prosperity and patriotism overshadowed much of the discontent in Newfoundland. One effect of this was to give the Commission a temporary reprieve from the demands for immediate constitutional change, but dissatisfaction with the state of affairs continued.

With World War Two came increasing pressure from both within and without the empire for Britain to divest itself of colonies. In the colonies the influence of returning soldiers, and of foreign soldiers stationed on their soil, as well as rising expectations resulting from wartime prosperity, all helped to fuel independence movements.[80] There was also increasing pressure from Britain's allies, the Soviet Union, and more importantly the United States, for Britain to renounce imperialism and dissolve the empire. Indeed, the war was being fought for democracy. This was expressed in the Atlantic Charter of 1941 which proclaimed "the right of all colonial peoples to choose the form of government under which they live."[81] Despite Churchill's efforts to have the empire excluded, many people took the charter very seriously. Some imperial officials saw it as a guideline within which to frame policy, and colonial nationalists were encouraged by the sentiments it expressed.[82] In some places, such as India, Ceylon, and Burma, colonial nationalists became powerful enough to force concessions from Britain. These concessions themselves further encouraged those who were demanding independence. For Britain's allies, the charter was seen as a promise that the colonies would be granted independence. Newfoundland's position, that of a white population descended from the British Isles with no democratic government, became increasingly embarrassing to Britain during the war.

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[80]Harold Pelling, *The Labour Governments, 1945-51* (New York : St Martins Press, 1984), p. 158.

[81]Bernard Porter, *The Lions Share : A Short History of British Imperialism 1850-1970* (London : Longman, 1975.), p. 309.

[82]*Ibid.*, p. 309.

Though much of the world began to experience an economic recovery during World War Two, prosperity was slow in coming to Newfoundland. In fact the war initially brought increased hardship. In the interest of the war effort taxes were increased in 1940 and expenditures decreased. These moves and the failure to improve conditions heightened dissatisfaction with the Commission.[83] That year saw the birth of the Newfoundland National Association, a group made up largely of St. John's businessmen and professionals disillusioned with the Commission.[84] They were dedicated to providing a forum for the debate of public questions, and giving the people a voice in policy making. Ultimately, the Association believed, the people would have to select their own representatives in the government.[85] Even when conditions did improve, many people continued to criticize the Commission. At the end of 1943, the Great War Veterans Association and the West Newfoundland Association, for example, criticized the Commission's priorities in maintaining a budgetary surplus instead of making a greater war effort.[86] The newspapers, which had long tried to operate as an opposition, continued to press for constitutional change. A.B. Perlin of the *Daily News* asked for an "early reconsideration of the constitutional position."[87] Meanwhile, he suggested that the Legislative Council be reactivated to act as a

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[83]Richard L. Clark, "Newfoundland 1939-49 : A Study of the Commission of Government and Confederation with Canada" (unpublished PhD dissertation, UCLA, 1951), p.162-4.

[84]Those among the executive deserving special note; F.M. O'Leary, George Crosbie, Ronald Ayre, James Baird, and Henley Munn representing many of the most established merchant families, and lawyer Gordon Higgins. Source : CNS, Walter Sparkes Collection, Box 1 File 9, *Newfoundland National Association* (Pamphlet).

[85]CNS, Walter Sparkes Collection, Box 1 File 9, James Howell to Walter Sparkes.

[86]The West Newfoundland Association was a voluntary society of taxpayers in Corner Brook dedicated to "the development of an intelligent interest in public affairs and the open discussion of both sides of controversial questions." In addition to its debating activities, the association had a number of committees which investigated various aspects of social and industrial policy. It also sometimes made representations to the Commission government on matters relating to the west coast of the island. A Central Newfoundland Association in Grand Falls was also formed. See West Newfoundland Association, Circular II, 1943.

[87]Clark, "Newfoundland 1939-49," p.188.

deliberative body and add some badly needed sensitivity to public opinion to the Commission.[88]

World War Two brought about a great transformation in Newfoundland, though it was slow in coming. Prosperity returned to the island, the government regained self-sufficiency, and the society and economy became increasingly integrated into North America. These changes were largely the result of American and Canadian defence spending in Newfoundland. The Americans were granted three bases in Newfoundland as a part of the Anglo-American bases for destroyers agreement, whereby Britain was given warships in return for permitting the United States to establish military bases in strategic parts of the empire. The economic spin-off from the construction and operation of these bases, and the Canadian contingents at Botwood, Gander, St. John's, and later Goose Bay, provided a large infusion of cash. As well, the war excluded many of Newfoundland's competitors from traditional markets, raising the price of fish. The buoyant economy and large number of Newfoundlanders serving overseas helped to reduce expenditures on able-bodied relief from a high of $ 1,646,505 in 1936-37 to $ 14,826 in 1943-44.[89] In 1940-41 the Commission recorded a budgetary surplus for the first time. Despite an increase in expenditures, Newfoundland was now supporting Britain. The surplus funds of the Commission were mainly transferred to London to be added to Britain's reserves ( $38 million by June 1942 ) or given to the British government in the form of interest-free loans ( $10,300,000 by January 1944 ).[90] Self sufficiency, one of the two conditions for the return of responsible government, had been achieved.

The granting of leases to the Americans precipitated a change in the

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[88] *Ibid.*, p.187.

[89] Mackay, *Newfoundland : Economic, Diplomatic and Strdtegic Studies*, Appendix A, Table #15.

[90] Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, p.243.

Canadian attitude toward Newfoundland. Prior to the war the Canadian government had realized that the defence of Newfoundland was essential to its own defence. Not only was the island's location important to the defence of the Canadian east coast, but the Sydney steel industry relied on ore from Bell Island.[91] Once the war started this Canadian interest in Newfoundland's defence took on a new urgency. In addition to strategic considerations, Canadian officials soon began to fear the growing American influence on the island that came with the American bases.[92] They feared this influence, and the construction-induced prosperity, might lead to the island becoming an American state, in effect another Alaska off the east coast. Canada initially moved hurriedly to assume responsibility for the defence of the island, and began stationing troops and constructing its own bases. The stakes for Canada were raised with the increase in money spent on the island, culminating in the construction of the airport at Goose Bay as an alternative to overcrowded Gander. Though Canada had a 99 year lease for the military use of Goose Bay, continued use of these airports after the war was seen as essential to Canadian trans-atlantic civil aviation. The Department of External Affairs felt that confederation offered the best hope of permanently assuring the protection of Canadian interests in Newfoundland.[93] With this in mind, several steps were taken to increase the profile of Canada in Newfoundland. Canadian officials began to play diplomatic one-upmanship with the Americans on the island. More importantly, the first Canadian High Commissioner to Newfoundland, C.J. Burchell, was appointed to try to smooth over difficulties between the two countries. It was hoped that Burchell, a Nova Scotian with family ties in Newfoundland, would be able to allay Newfoundlanders' suspicions of Canada, and encourage a renewed consideration

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[91]David C. Mackenzie, "Canada and the Entrance of Newfoundland into Confederation, 1939-1949." (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1984), p.32-33.

[92]*Ibid.*, p.58.

[93]Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*, p.162.

of confederation.[94]

While Canada was developing a greater interest in the island, the evolution of British policy also accelerated. In February 1942 Labour Party Leader and Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee became Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. He already had an interest in Newfoundland. As a member of the opposition in 1933, he had opposed the imposition of commission government, suggesting that it was a measure to rescue Newfoundland's bondholders, not the people of the island.[95] He remained of the opinion that Commission had been a mistake.[96] Like many other M.P.'s, he had been shocked by the Amulree report's description of the island's truck system, and felt it should be changed.

Soon after Attlee took office, events in Newfoundland turned British attention to the island once more. Changes in income tax legislation in 1942 precipitated a strong reaction against the Commission from the Board of Trade. The Board insisted that since self-sufficiency had returned, some form of representative government should be restored.[97] Attlee had his personal assistant, Grant Mackenzie, draft a memorandum on the Newfoundland problem. Mackenzie suggested that responsible government be restored, but that first a reorganized Commission should carry out a long-term plan of social and economic reconstruction.[98] Attlee also received memoranda on the Newfoundland problem from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Dominion Affairs, P.V. Emrys-Evans,

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[94]Kathrine E. Hayman, "The Origins and Functions of the Canadian High Commissioner to Newfoundland" (unpublished MA thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1979), p.13-14.

[95]*Parliamentary Debates, (Commons)*, Vol. 284, No. 19, Col. 729-31 and No. 16, Col. 723-31.

[96]*Ibid.*, Vol. 395, Col. 1770.

[97]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Vol. 2 Part 1, Burchell to Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, 30 June 1942, p.31.

[98]Peter Neary, "Great Britain and the Future of Newfoundland, 1939-1945", *Newfoundland Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1985, p.33.

and the Permanent Under-Secretary for Dominion Affairs, E. Machtig. Emrys-Evans felt that the war had opened a whole new series of questions relating to Newfoundland. As he put it, "In the light of general as well as particular developments a new and vigorous policy with regard to Newfoundland has become imperative."[99] He suggested that the immediate aim of British policy should be to improve conditions in the country so it might once more be able to govern itself. However, he felt the ultimate objective should be to "bring Newfoundland into the Confederation" by encouraging good relations between Canada and Newfoundland.[100] Machtig agreed that since a small, resource poor country like Newfoundland would be unlikely to survive in the modern world, union with Canada should be the ultimate aim of British policy. He also thought that "when the war ends there will be an overwhelming political move in favor of the restoration of self-government."[101] Attlee agreed that a new policy toward Newfoundland would have to be drafted, and "thought the best thing to do was to see some of the people of Newfoundland and see what were [their] views."[102] With this in mind he visited the island in September, 1942. The purpose of his visit remained a secret, though he did announce that after the war a "new chapter" would open in Newfoundland's history.[103] He recorded his impressions

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[99] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Emrys-Evans to Attlee and Machtig, 10 June 1942, p.23-26.

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] *Ibid.*, Machtig to Attlee, 13 June 1943, p. 26-29.

[102] *Parliamentary Debates, (Commons)*, Vol. 395, Col. 1770.

[103] Neary, "Clement Attlee's Visit to Newfoundland September, 1942", p. 102.

and potential options in a brief memorandum.[104]

Attlee decided that the Commission and the Dominions Office had better agree on a policy before the end of the war.[105] With this in mind he expressed his views to the Commission in November, 1942. What disturbed Attlee about Newfoundland was:

> the general lack of appreciation among the people of the island of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, their relative ignorance of public affairs and their strong disinclination, while looking to the central government to supply all their wants, to assume responsibility for the ordering of local affairs in their own districts.[106]

To solve this problem before the question of the return of self-government became urgent "there should be a process of political education."[107] Attlee was not specific on what form the political education should take, except to maintain that local government was the key to a politically mature people.

> Education in democracy is a matter in which practice is more important than precept...I am certain that a vigorous effort must be made to arouse opinion in the island to a realization that the British system of parliamentary democracy has its foundation in the strength of local institutions...It is no good setting up a form of parliamentary

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[104] "We can with general assent continue the Commission till the end of the war. There will be an irresistible demand supported by all the weight of democratic sentiment for a return of self government. If we accede to this we shall probably have a government which will spend the available balances in an effort to cope with depression with a consequent return to bankruptcy. We can refuse self government with the result that we will have to meet all the odium of post war slump which will be laid to our charge because we refused to let the people run their own affairs. We can try to formulate some system less than full self government leaving the break in our own hands. We shall then promote irresponsibility and probably get the blame for everything that goes wrong. We can concede self government now while the going is good and while war conditions impose a certain restraint on the government. We can try to devise some different form of government which while democratic does not conform to the Westminster model. We can put off the evil day by appointing a royal commission." See PRO, DO 35/723/n2/73, p.58-67.

[105] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Attlee to Commission government, 25 November 1942, p.42.

[106] *Ibid.*

[107] *Ibid.*

government unless the spirit in which it is to work is understood.[108]

Since Newfoundlanders had not acquired local government, and he did not want the conservative professional and business elite of St. John's to dictate Newfoundland's constitutional decision, he wondered if regional associations like the West Newfoundland Association could be established in other areas to help train the people politically. As well, elected regional councils representing the "fishermen, loggers, agriculturalists, factory workers and trading classes" could help to break down religious and occupational cleavages.[109] These councils could have District Magistrates as chairmen, and form subcommittees of the existing reconstruction committee. Their function could be to consider the problems of local interest specifically, and national interest generally. Attlee was willing to allow the committees an advisory role. "Suggestions could be brought up to the main [reconstruction] committee and so to the Commissioners."[110] However, they were not to become "mere vehicles for venting present grievances."[111] Proper guidance, and a concentration on the future in their mandate, could prevent this from happening, he thought.

Newfoundlanders were reluctant to make "a sudden reversion to full self-government at a single plunge" he wrote; therefore one possible arrangement would be self-government with Britain retaining financial control.[112] This arrangement would have the advantage of providing political training for Newfoundlanders; then at the end of five years, if the economic prospects looked favorable, full self-government would be returned. Though this option was attractive, Attlee felt that the 1933 Newfoundland Act was a contract, and could

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[108] *Ibid.*

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] *Ibid.*

[111] *Ibid.*

[112] *Ibid.*

not be unilaterally changed by Britain. Therefore, if the two conditions for the return of self-government existed, "it would not be practical to refuse it."[113] He wondered if the return of self-government in stages would be perceived as a breach of faith. He also commented that due to public opinion, confederation with Canada was out of the question, and the continuation of Commission of Government impractical.

The Commissioners' responses to Attlee's proposals varied somewhat. The Commissioner of Justice felt that the return of self-government in stages would not be perceived as a breach of faith. The first stage might be, as Attlee had suggested, advisory councils chaired by the District Magistrates, and some administrative and financial control could be devolved to them.[114] The Commissioner of Natural Resources maintained that in order to avoid charges that the councils were being controlled by the government, the magistrates should not be made chairmen. He also warned that the government had "tried to encourage the spread of local government, but experience has shown that committees of various kinds, which have started with an appearance of energy and resolution, soon lost their enthusiasm and disintegrated, or alternately demanded executive power."[115]

On 17 March, 1943, Attlee informed the Commission that he had decided that Parliament needed to be better informed about Newfoundland.[116] He had informed the war cabinet of his proposal to send three members of parliament to Newfoundland to gather information and to gauge Newfoundlanders' capacity to govern themselves. This "goodwill" mission would also "serve a very useful purpose in showing Newfoundlanders that we have the very special problem of the

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[113] *Ibid.*

[114] *Ibid.*, Commissioner of Justice and Defence to Attlee, 19 December 1942, p.47-48.

[115] *Ibid.*, Commissioner of Natural Resources to Attlee, 19 December 1942, p.49.

[116] *Ibid.*, Attlee to Commission government, 17 March 1943, p.59.

island very much in mind, and in stimulating interest in the expression of local opinion on the question of post-war changes."[117] A formal inquiry would be inappropriate due to Newfoundland's preoccupation with the war effort, the unpredictability of the post war conditions, and the large number of Newfoundlanders overseas. Therefore, the mission would be informal, have no defined terms of reference, and present no written report to Parliament.[118]

Attlee chose Charles Ammon, a Labour whip and old political ally, to chair the goodwill mission. The other members were Conservative M.P. Sir Derek Gunston and A.P. Herbert, a popular writer and independent M.P. for Oxford University. Their secretary, G.W. St. John Chadwick of the Dominions Office, accompanied them and aided Ammon in drafting his report. The mission made its way around Newfoundland and Labrador during the summer of 1943, returning to Britain in the fall. All three members filed unofficial reports with the Dominions Office, and circulated copies privately among interested members of Parliament. They also participated in a debate in the House of Commons, and addressed the Empire Parliamentary Association.[119] The reports remained secret, though Ammon, by then Lord-Ammon, published his as a Fabian Society research pamphlet in 1945.[120]

Ammon thought that the government had made a "solemn promise that the constitution would be reviewed as soon as the island became economically independent" and therefore any changes to or prolongation of the Commission were not possible without first consulting the Newfoundland people.[121] However,

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[117] *Ibid.*

[118] *Parliamentary Debates, (Commons)*, Vol. 389, Col. 177-9.

[119] *Ibid.*, Vol. 395.

[120] Lord Ammon, *Newfoundland : The Forgotten Island* (London : Fabian Society, 1944).

[121] PRO, D.O. 35 1336/n402/1/10, p.48-84.

no unanimity existed in Newfoundland as to what constitutional changes should be made. Ammon suggested Newfoundlanders were unanimous in only three things. First, that constitutional change would have to wait until the war was over. Second, that a return to responsible government as it existed in 1933 was unthinkable; and thirdly that political representation of some kind should be given to the people.[122] Ammon himself felt that only five options deserved consideration : return to responsible government, union with Britain along the Northern Ireland model, federation with Canada, federation with the United States, or continuation of a modified form of commission of government. In light of the promise made in 1933, not returning responsible government if Newfoundlanders asked for it would be difficult. Yet the island was not ripe for self-government on the grounds of:

> Political apathy, apparent lack of disinterested persons willing and able to form a new administration, the widely expressed fear that a small clique of old politicians and business men living chiefly in St. John's would still dominate any such government, the almost total lack of local government, uncertainty about the future economic status, [and] the lack of any guarantee...that any independent government would faithfully carry out [a plan of social betterment][123]

Both Ammon and Gunston reported that union with either the U.S. or Canada appealed to few Newfoundlanders, and union with Britain along the Northern Ireland model was impractical.[124] Ammon went on to say that confederation with Canada should be kept in mind though, since "there is a tendency today to talk and think in terms of larger unities."[125] Gunston also believed that union with Canada might be the ultimate solution to Newfoundland's economic problems, but this could only be achieved after responsible government had been returned. In his view, the island belonged to Newfoundlanders and Britain could

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[122] *Ibid.*

[123] *Ibid.*

[124] *Ibid.*; and PRO DO 35/1336/n402 pp.87-124.

[125] PRO DO 35/1336/n402/1/10, p.48-84.

not "give it away without consulting the people."[126] Furthermore, he reminded the Dominions Office, "There is the matter of the Atlantic Charter to consider."[127]

Both Ammon and Gunston attributed the Commissioners' unpopularity to their failure to have contact with the people.[128] For this reason they recommended Commission of Government be modified to make it more responsive to public opinion. They favored having the Newfoundland members elected for a term of three years, and the British members appointed for five years. To the concern that the role of the governor was inconsistent with the role of chairman, Ammon suggested that the Commission members elect their own chairman.[129] Gunston advocated the appointment of an independent chairman and a public relations officer.[130] It was hoped that these schemes would answer the charges that the Commission was unresponsive to public opinion, though falling short of an elected advisory council. Such a council was thought to be potentially divisive, since it might act as an elected opposition to the Commission. Ammon also thought that a modified Commission might train Newfoundlanders to govern themselves, while retaining financial control in British hands.[131]

Ammon and Gunston felt that since any constitutional change required the consent of the Newfoundland people, a referendum on the adoption of the modified Commission should be held at the end of the war. To sweeten the pot

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[126]PRO, DO 35/1336/n402/1/10, p.87-124.

[127]*Ibid.*

[128]Ammon also suggested that the farther one went from St. John's the less the opposition to the Commission. Opposition in rural Newfoundland was mostly the result of local issues such as the lack of a road or the state of disrepair of a local wharf, he reported.

[129]PRO, DO 35/1336/n402 p.48-84.

[130]PRO, DO 35/1336/n402 p.87-124.

[131]PRO, DO 35/1336/n402 p.48-84.

the Dominions Office would devise a development plan tied to the acceptance of the modified Commission.[132] Ammon thought that this modified Commission should last ten years, at which time a further plebiscite on the return of responsible government would be held.[133] Gunston proposed that it be held five years after the end of the war. By that time, he thought, the post war economic situation would be evident. This would have the additional advantage of forcing the people to prepare for a possible return of responsible government, thus putting them through an exercise in democracy.[134]

The third member, A.P. Herbert, recommended that the plebiscite be held two years after the end of the war. The announcement of the plebiscite would be coupled with a public statement that, if the people chose to return to responsible government, Britain would be willing to assist Newfoundland. One year after this announcement, an election would be held to choose the three Newfoundland Commissioners; a seventh Commissioner would be appointed to act as chairman. If responsible government were chosen in the plebiscite, it would be returned one year later. In any event, at the end of the war, or possibly even sooner, a "citizens' council" should be appointed to discuss the possible forms of the future constitution. In the time that remained before the plebiscite, the Commission or the citizens' council, would undertake a campaign of political education. He also recommended a ten year development plan be put in place as soon as possible.[135]

Anticipating that a new policy was about to be announced, the *Evening Telegram* suggested, on 29 November 1943, that a "national assembly", be

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[132] *Ibid.*

[133] *Ibid.*

[134] PRO, DO 35/1336/n402 p.87-124.

[135] PRO, DO 35/1335/n402/1/9, Comparative table Goodwill Mission Reports.

established.[136] It suggested that the assembly be elected on the basis of the former electoral districts, and sit for two years while considering:

> all matters relating to the welfare of Newfoundland...[and deciding] whether the country was capable of assuming full administrative responsibility, whether it would be to its advantage to enter the Canadian federation, or whether its elected legislature should be restricted, as in certain colonies, by powers vested in a chamber whose members were appointed by the Imperial Government.[137]

This proposed body was similar to Herbert's council of citizens, and close to the thinking in the Dominions Office.[138]

After considering the goodwill mission reports, the new Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Lord Cranbourne, drafted a policy for approval by the war cabinet. He thought that under the terms of the "bargain" made with the Newfoundland people in 1933, Britain had "pledged" to return self-government if it was requested. Therefore, he recommended that as soon as possible after the war, the government "provide machinery...for enabling the Newfoundland people to examine the situation and express their views as to the form of government they desire, having regard to the financial and economic conditions prevailing at the time."[139] Cranbourne suggested that no immediate decision be made on the form of this "machinery"; however, he continued:

> One proposal...which appeals to me is that made by Mr. A.P. Herbert, M.P., that a national convention should be set up after the war, composed of members representative of all classes and interests in Newfoundland, and empowered to discuss and determine amongst themselves, with the guidance of a constitutional lawyer from home, the

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[136] *Evening Telegram*, St. John's, 29 November 1943.

[137] *Ibid.*

[138] Whether these were conceived of independently or not hardly matters. It is possible that Herbert mentioned his council while in Newfoundland, or was given the idea by someone on the island. The idea may have originated with R.B. Job, a merchant and member of the suspended Legislative Council, as was claimed by the editor of the *Daily News*, A.B. Perlin. See *Daily News*, St. John's, 26 March 1946.

[139] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Cranbourne to War Cabinet, 8 November 1943, p.80-85.

> form of government to be recommended both to the Newfoundland people and to the United Kingdom government.[140]

Cranbourne's policy was approved by the war cabinet, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, P.V. Emrys-Evans, prepared to make an announcement in Parliament.

On 2 December 1943 the policy framework within which the Dominions Office and the Commission government had to work was announced in Parliament. The policy was governed by the fact that "the arrangements made in 1933 included a pledge that as soon as the island's difficulties were overcome and the country once again self-supporting, responsible government, on request from the people of Newfoundland, would be restored."[141] However, since the self-sufficiency was a result of abnormal wartime conditions, any constitutional changes would have to wait until the war had ended. Machinery would then be established for the Newfoundland people to examine their future prospects and express their view on the future form of government.[142] Meanwhile, the Secretary of State would ascertain what form of machinery would be acceptable to the people. One possible form was a national convention along the lines of the citizens council that A.P. Herbert had proposed.[143] Emrys-Evans maintained that no particular solution would be imposed, and if the return of self-government were asked for, it would be granted. Any other constitutional alternative would be considered.[144]

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[140] *Ibid.*

[141] *Parliamentary Debates, (Commons)*, Vol. 395, col. 599, 2 December 1943.

[142] *Ibid.*, col. 600.

[143] Herbert was later of the opinion that Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee was at this stage already committed to a National Convention. See A.P. Herbert, *Independent Member* (London : Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1950), p.295.

[144] *Parliamentary Debates, (Commons)*, Vol. 395, col. 600, 2 December 1943.

This statement was treated with cynicism and apathy by the Newfoundland press. The *Telegram* commented, "[it is] no radical departure for the British government, but is just the logical working out of its rather negative policy towards this country."[145] The *Daily News* expressed a similar view of the Parliamentary statement:

> There is nothing new in all this. It is the policy of the Dominions Office from the beginning and it is a policy not only of do nothing but even of whitewashing for the Dominions Office, by its negative attitude and unimaginative outlook [it] is essentially to blame for the whole sorry mess.[146]

On a more positive note, the *Telegram* thought that the statement was consistent with the promise made in 1933. The only question remaining, it continued, was what would be the form of the machinery.[147]

The Dominions Office thought that if political independence were granted to Newfoundland without reconstruction of the economy, the island's government would again collapse, and Britain would have to once more assume responsibility. Since the only way to avoid this was to provide a sound economy the Dominions Office began to plan for an expensive post-war reconstruction programme that was compatible with the constitutional plans. In other words, whatever Newfoundland's political future held, reconstruction would go ahead.[148]

In January 1944 Cranbourne, began to discuss with the Commission the form of the forthcoming machinery. He preferred a national convention selected along one of three lines: nominated by the governor to form a cross section of Newfoundland's society, elected representatives of groups in Newfoundland, or elected on the same basis as the former House of Assembly. If the convention

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[145] *Evening Telegram*, 3 December 1943.

[146] *Daily News*, 4 December 1943.

[147] *Evening Telegram*, 4 December 1943.

[148] Neary, "Great Britain and the Future of Newfoundland", esp. p.45.

were nominated by the governor, the British would be accused of having "packed the jury", he commented; if elected, the convention might reawaken political feeling to the point where the convention might act as an opposition. At this point the government might have gone too far towards returning responsible government to be able to turn back. Cranbourne therefore suggested that groups such as the trade unions and the Board of Trade be asked to nominate members of the convention. Once in place, the convention would draw up recommendations to be put to the public, but the government would leave itself free to decide later the procedure for dealing with these recommendations. As well, he suggested that a constitutional lawyer from Britain might be appointed to act as chairman.[149]

The Commission was hesitant about the idea of a convention, preferring instead a simple referendum on responsible or continued commission government. Despite this preference, it proceeded to make constructive suggestions about the form of the convention. The Commission thought that given the nature of Newfoundland society, only a territorially elected assembly could represent all sections of the community. This approach would also free Britain from criticism and be "unassailable from the point of view of democratic theory."[150] It was felt that the Dominions Office's reservations about a territorially elected body could be met by having a system of primary and secondary elections. The primary elections would form a central body, which would then elect from its own ranks members to the convention. This would, in the Commission's view, avoid a reawakening of political passions and would act as a filter, giving a better quality candidate to the convention. Fearing few members of the convention would be able to understand the complex economic issues involved, it also suggested that a royal commission to inquire into the economic situation before the convention

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[149]PRO, DO 35/1338/N402/1/11, DO to Newfoundland, 6 January 1944.

[150]PRO, DO 35/1338/N402/1/11, Nfld to DO, 12 February 1944.

met.[151]

The Dominions Office stood firm in its belief that the convention was the best way of airing the issues, and thought that failing to call it would contravene the 1943 statement of policy. It did concede, however, that the Commission was right in suggesting only a territorially elected convention would be effective. On the Commission's other points, Machtig agreed that a scheme of primary and secondary elections might minimize the dangers of an elected body.[152] Yet the Commission continued to warn the Dominions Office that they feared "no National Convention representative will possess the knowledge and qualifications which performance of the task demands."[153] To deal with this, the British officials adopted an idea from A.P. Herbert's goodwill mission report. Herbert had suggested that a constitutional lawyer from Britain be provided to the convention to guide the discussion in technical matters.[154]

By May, 1944, all concerned agreed the convention would be established. Yet when Ira Wild, Commissioner of Finance, visited Britain early in May, a considerable difference of views between the Commission and the Dominions Office became apparent. Wild reiterated that the Commission had accepted the convention idea with reluctance, and feared that the body would interfere in the administration of the island. The solution the Commission envisaged was a report on economic and constitutional options, prepared by a body of experts, to guide the debate. Clutterbuck replied that the investigation of constitutional options was up to the convention itself, and thus an economic report by an economist of

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[151]PRO, DO 35/1338/N402/1/11, Analysis of Newfoundland Telegram by P.A. Clutterbuck, 13 March 1944.

[152]PRO, DO 35/1338/N402/1/11, Analysis of Newfoundland Situation by Machtig, 13 March 1944.

[153]PRO, DO 35/1341/N402/26, Newfoundland to DO, 28 July 1944.

[154]PRO, DO 35/1338/N402/1/11, Note in File.

standing would suffice. Discussions on the primary and secondary election scheme were held, but no decision made. There was also agreement that "carpet baggers from St John's" must be kept out of rural ridings, and that the convention must not be allowed to function as the government of Newfoundland.[155]

In August the Dominions Office began drafting a tentative timetable for the unfolding of events in Newfoundland. This "sequence of events document", as it came to be known, suggested a Parliamentary announcement on the "machinery" as soon as Parliament reassembled.[156] Meanwhile, the Commission would work out the details of the primary and secondary elections. Once the reconstruction plan was completed, it would be first sent to the Treasury, and then to the cabinet for approval. A joint development board would then be announced. The election to the National Convention would be held in the summer of 1945, and the issues would be put to the Newfoundland people in the autumn.[157]

Pushing forward with preparations for the convention, the Commission assigned Magistrate Nehemiah Short of Corner Brook the task of looking into the mechanics of forming a convention.[158] Short was seconded to the Department of Home Affairs and Education, and provided with an office and a staff to aid his study.[159] On 12 August 1944 Short reported finding overwhelming difficulties in the primary and secondary election scheme. He felt it would be cumbersome, unpopular, and difficult to administer. As well, the nature of the country would make it unlikely that all people would be able to vote. Furthermore, the cost of

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[155]PRO, DO 35/1338/N402/1/11, Minutes of discussions with Mr. Wild, 8 and 9 May 1944.

[156]PRO, DO 35/1342/N402/1/11, "Sequence of Events".

[157]*Ibid.*

[158]Short had previous electoral experience as the returning officer in the district of Fogo.

[159]PRO, DO 35/1341/N402/26, Extract of Minutes of Commission, 14 July 1944.

the primaries would be large and "incommensurate with results achieved."[160] He also concluded that it was unlikely delegates to a district convention would come forward. The Commission considered this report, and unanimously agreed with its conclusion that the two stage electoral scheme was impractical.[161] Short was instructed to consider other possible methods of election.

Short's second report proposed an election largely along the lines of the former House of Assembly. The districts would be based on the 1925 Election Act, and all Newfoundland residents over 21 years of age would be entitled to vote.[162] In a departure from tradition, Short suggested candidates would have to be *bona fide* residents of their district, and would have to make a fifty dollar deposit. On 7 September the Commission recommended to the Dominions Office that this be accepted.[163] Magistrate Short began to prepare a draft of an election act while the Commission waited for Dominions Office approval.[164]

The subtleties of British policy were outlined to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Anderson, by Lord Cranbourne, in September 1944. "Newfoundlanders are to choose their own course for themselves after the war," Cranbourne wrote. He continued, "It is clear, however, that our policy cannot stop there, i.e. we cannot just leave it at that and wait and see what happens."[165] Three measures would be taken to influence the debate. First, the terms of reference of the convention would be broad enough to include the "whole field" of

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[160]PANL, GN 38 S-3-5-3 File #10, Governor to Secretary of State of Dominion Affairs, 15 August 1944.

[161]*Ibid.*

[162]In previous elections male suffrage was at 21 years of age and female at 25.

[163]PRO, DO 35/1342/N402, Newfoundland to Do, 7 September 1944.

[164]PANL, GN 38 S-3-1-1, Walsh to Commission, 6 December 1945.

[165]PRO, DO 35/1342/N402/29, Cranbourne to Anderson, 22 September 1944.

constitutional options. Second, a constitutional lawyer would be provided, and lastly a financial report prepared. These would ensure only realistic options would be discussed. Finally, the Chair of the convention would be a judge of the Supreme Court.[166]

All of the Dominion Office's constitutional and reconstruction planning came to a head when the detailed reconstruction plan was sent to the Treasury for approval. The Treasury replied that Britain's currency situation *vis a vis* Canada and the United States made British aid to Newfoundland impossible. Since the Treasury could not supply the Canadian dollars needed to fund reconstruction, the Dominions Office looked to Canada.[167] On 15 September 1945 Clutterbuck inquired into the willingness of the Canadian government to aid Newfoundland. The Canadian Department of External Affairs was unwilling to help. However, the Department would be willing to accept the island into the Canadian federation if Newfoundlanders were to ask for it.[168] This would safeguard Canadian interests in the island and Labrador, and save the hard pressed British the expense of providing for Newfoundland's reconstruction. The Canadian officials insisted that the Dominions Office would have to make it clear to Newfoundland that no further financial assistance from Britain would be available. This, they thought, would "assist" Newfoundlanders in coming to accept the confederation option.[169] Thus the encouragement of Newfoundlanders to join the Canadian federal union became the topic of high level talks between Ottawa and London.

These sensitive negotiations caused Cranbourne to decide to postpone

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[166] *Ibid.*

[167] McCann "Confederation Revisited"

[168] Neary, "Great Britain and the Future of Newfoundland, 1939-1945", p.51.

[169] *Ibid.*, p.52.

indefinitely the announcement of the convention.[170] Yet, the pressure to make the statement continued to mount, especially as the war came to a close. The new Secretary of State for Dominions Affairs, Lord Addison, decided that union with Canada should be the objective of British policy.[171] On 18 October, 1945, Addison's proposals were put before the Cabinet for approval. Addison felt that great caution was required if confederation was to be achieved; he wrote:

> It would, of course, be most important that no hint that this is the solution we envisage should be allowed to come out either here or in Newfoundland. The initiative must be left entirely to the Newfoundlanders, and we must take care to avoid any appearance of seeking to influence them in any way. At the same time, we must say or do nothing which would conflict with this objective or make it harder to achieve.[172]

When the matter had came up for discussion by the Cabinet in November 1944 Attlee had pressed his view that fishermen should be elected to the convention, and asked the Secretary of State if some seats might be reserved for fishermen. Cranbourne had held his ground, and insisted that only a freely elected convention would fit the bill.[173] A full year later in November, 1945, when the Cabinet was considering Addison's proposals, Attlee was still asking for changes to ensure a representative assembly. Once more he suggested a vocational basis, or that a combination of vocational and electoral methods be used.[174] With Attlee's concerns in mind Addison instructed the Dominions Office once more to consider special measures of ensuring local representation.[175] The Dominions Office promptly sent a telegram to the Commission asking them to

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[170]PRO, DO 35/1343/N402/32, Cranbourne to Anderson, 19 January 1945.

[171]PRO, DO 35/1347/N402/54, Memo to Cabinet by Addison, 18 October 1945.

[172]*Ibid.*

[173]PRO, DO 35/1343/N402/32, Note of a talk between Cranbourne and Attlee.

[174]PRO, DO 35/1345/N402, Extract from Cabinet Meeting, 1 November 1945.

[175]PRO, DO 35/1345/N402/43, ? to Clutterbuck, 1 November 1945.

consider combining geographic and vocational methods.[176]

The Commission held firm, insisting that a strict geographically elected body was best, and that suggesting any combination of methods would not be practical.[177] Addison accepted the Commission's views, and reiterated to the Cabinet that the best way of ensuring fishermen and workers would have a say in their future was to insist all candidates be *bona fide* residents of their districts.[178] On 27 November, 1945, the Cabinet endorsed Addison's plans, including the geographic basis. Some members differed with the Secretary of State's view that the ideal solution to the Newfoundland problem was union with Canada. Yet Addison's proposals were accepted by the cabinet on the understanding that the initiative had to come from Newfoundlanders.[179] With the policy of working toward confederation finally accepted by the Cabinet, the Dominions Office prepared the statement that would set events in motion in Newfoundland.

On 11 December, 1945, Clement Attlee announced to Parliament and Newfoundland that a geographically elected national convention would be convened as early as climatic conditions permitted.[180] It would be elected according to the traditions and districts of the former Newfoundland House of Assembly. In addition, all candidates would have to be *bona fide* residents of the districts they sought to represent. A judge of the Supreme Court would chair the convention, and its mandate would be:

> To consider and discuss amongst themselves, as elected representatives of the Newfoundland people, the changes that have

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[176]PRO, DO 35/1345/N402/43, DO to Newfoundland, 8 November 1945.

[177]PRO, DO 35/1345/N402/43, Newfoundland to DO, 14 November 1945.

[178]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Addison to Cabinet, 21 November 1945, p.188-190.

[179]PRO, DO 35/1345/N402/43, Extract from Cabinet discussion, 27 November 1945.

[180]Untill the coast was free of ice transportation difficulties made organizing an election impossible.

> taken place in the financial and economic situation of the island since 1934, and bearing in mind the extent to which the high revenues of recent years have been due to wartime conditions, to examine the position of the country and to make recommendations to His Majesty's Government as to the possible forms of future government to be put before the people at a national referendum.[181]

The British would also aid the convention by providing an objective and factual report on Newfoundland's financial and economic position, and an expert advisor to give guidance on constitutional forms and procedure. Meanwhile, Attlee continued, the Commission would continue their reconstruction measures. Britain would be willing to help Newfoundland's new government get off to a good start, but, Attlee continued in a warning designed to encourage Newfoundlanders to consider union with Canada, "the special difficulties of our financial position over the next few years may well preclude us from undertaking fresh commitments."[182]

The announcement brought into the open once more the constitutional debate that had never been truly settled. Representative government in 1832, responsible government in 1855, consideration of confederation in 1869 and again in 1895, and the commission in 1934, all had been attempts to find constitutional solutions to Newfoundland's problems. The depression and the war had both delayed consideration of Newfoundland's future, but now Newfoundlanders were asking once more for the answer to the question of how to govern a small scattered population with a fragile economy. For reasons of British policy this time much of that debate would take place in a new kind of public forum - the National Convention.

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[181] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 5 Series, 11 December 1945, col. 210-211.

[182] *Ibid.*

# Chapter 2

## Preparations for the National Convention

Once the creation of the convention had been announced, the Dominions Office began to prepare for its establishment. This involved more than just the mechanics of an election, since conditions had to be right to maximize the chances of union with Canada being recommended. A chairman and constitutional advisor were found to try to direct the Convention's attention, and a report on the economic and financial state of the island prepared to underline the perilous nature of independence. The government officials were not the only people active during this period. Many Newfoundlanders did not wait until the Convention started to begin preparations for their preferred form of government.

The parliamentary announcement of December 1945 elicited a mixed reaction in Newfoundland. Major Peter Cashin suggested the Convention was a "red herring" designed to confuse the issue, and a breach of the pledge made in 1934.[1] His radio speeches attacking the Commission were a constant source of annoyance to the government, and of fear for the Broadcast Corporation.[2] The cautious general manager of the Corporation, William Galgay, even after vetting the unpredictable Cashin's speeches, felt compelled to inquire into purchasing libel insurance.[3] Cashin demanded the cancellation of the "illegal and unconstitutional

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[1]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to External Affairs, 24 January 1946. p.205-206.

[2]The policy of the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland on political broadcasts became more relaxed at the end of the war. It stipulated, "That former Cabinet Members and members of the Legislative Council wishing to discuss particular or general public questions may be accorded broadcasting facilities free of charge. Such broadcasts are not to contain any attack on any person or class as to his or their private or public activities. ... Statements that might render the corporation open to an action for libel must not be permitted." See CNS, Galgay Papers, File #23, Chairman to Galgay, 22 May 1945.

[3]*Ibid.*, Galgay to Chairman, 1 June 1945.

Convention" and the immediate return of responsible government.[4] He maintained that as an expression of the will of the people, the convention would be a sham:

> with a judge directing the meeting and no less than two hirelings of the Dominions Office, imported specially [sic] for the purpose of spell-binding the convention, to dazzle and bewilder the delegates with carefully prepared speeches. And just think of it, after all this the delegates will have no authority to make binding decisions.[5]

He also organized petitions from all over the island demanding that the Convention be cancelled. Though some petitions were signed, the response was less than Cashin had hoped, and the Commission conveniently decided that they did not represent the view of the people.[6] But Cashin's was not the only voice heard. Others, particularly in the labour movement, continued to press for the return of responsible government.[7] A.B. Perlin of the *Daily News* agreed that there had been breach of promise, and claimed the Convention was both clumsy and confusing.[8] Despite this vocal opposition, the Commissioner of Home Affairs and Education, Albert Walsh, reported to the Dominions Office that general satisfaction and relief existed among the Newfoundland public.[9]

Certainly, not everyone opposed the Convention. The *Evening Telegram* defended the idea, and in a series of thinly veiled attacks on Cashin chastised those "who insinuate that the Convention is nothing more than a deep laid plot."[10] As well, the *Telegram* denounced the petitions, and warned those writing

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[4]PANL, Peter Cashin Papers P4/18.

[5]PANL, Cashin Papers, P4/18, Radio Speech 2 February 1946.

[6]PANL, GN 38 S-3-1-2 File #5, Draft Reply, Newfoundland to DO, 30 May 1946.

[7]DO 35 1142/N402/38 and 40.

[8]*Daily News*, 12 and 13 December 1945.

[9]PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22, Walsh to DO, 12 January 1946.

[10]*Evening Telegram*, 12 February 1946.

to the paper that it would not print "statements that are nothing more than surmises and insinuations of bad faith either in reference to persons or other countries."[11] The Commission, which had kept its silence under Cashin's barrage, eventually felt compelled to respond, and the Commissioner of Justice, Harry Winter, publicly refuted Cashin's claims that the convention was unconstitutional.[12]

Impervious to criticism, the Dominions Office pressed ahead in its preparations, advising the governor that an act of the Commission consisting of several parts would suffice to set up the convention. A recital would set out the purpose of the convention, while the body of the act would make provision for the appointed chairman, the election, and the operating procedure. The Dominions Office thought that the convention should be allowed to adopt its own procedure, but "must" not have the power to "summon persons (e.g. Commissioners) to appear before it to give evidence."[13] With this advice in hand, the Commission ordered Short to prepare a draft election bill, and devise a schedule of allowances and travel expenses for approval by the Commission.[14]

To ensure that the fishermen leaving for Labrador in the spring would have the opportunity to vote, the legislation had to be passed quickly. On 29 March, 1946, Walsh presented the draft legislation to the Commission. The bill immediately passed through first and second reading, and was published for public comment and Dominions Office approval.[15] After making necessary changes the amended act was read a third time on 17 May, 1946, and presented

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[11] *Ibid.*, 15 February 1946.

[12] *Evening Telegram*, 13 April 1946.

[13] PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22 File #5, DO to Newfoundland, 29 January 1946.

[14] PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22 File #5, Short to Walsh, 5 February 1946.

[15] PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22 File #5, Newfoundland to DO, 29 March 1946.

for royal assent.[16] The National Convention Act ( No. 16, 1946 ) provided for forty five representatives and a judge of the Supreme Court as a non-voting chairman. The act reiterated the parliamentary statement of December, 1945, providing a mandate to discuss and recommend the options to be considered by the people. It also included a reminder of the perilous long-term prospects for the Newfoundland economy.

> It shall be the duty and function of the convention to consider and discuss among themselves as elected representatives of the people of Newfoundland the changes that have taken place in the financial and economic situation of the island since 1934, and, bearing in mind the extent to which the high revenues of recent years have been due to wartime conditions, to examine the position of the country and to make recommendations to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom as to the possible forms of future government to be put before the people at a national referendum.[17]

The act defined each of 38 districts along the lines of the previous election act, all but four of which would return one representative. By virtue of their population, Harbour Main and Grand Falls would have two members each, and St. John's City East and St. John's City West would return three each.[18] Due to difficulties in conducting an election in Labrador the act allowed the governor to appoint a representative, bringing the total to 45. This was later amended to make provision for an election in Labrador. The election would occur on 21 June, except in the districts of White Bay and St. Barbe. Since bad weather had prevented the completion of voter's lists in these districts, it was decided that these elections would occur later. The governor would summon the first meeting, after which the convention would decide when and where further meetings would be held. The convention was also empowered to set its own rules and procedures by a two thirds vote of all the members.[19]

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[16]PANL, GN 38 S-1-1-2, Minutes of Commission 17 May 1946.

[17]PANL, National Convention Act, No. 16 1946, Clause 3.

[18]*Ibid.*, Clause 9.

[19]*Ibid.*, Clause 4 and 7.

Once the act was in place the Commission quickly appointed Chief Justice Cyril J. Fox as chairman, and Nehemiah Short as chief electoral officer.[20] Fox had been selected chairman in November, 1945, on the basis of his experience in the House of Assembly, including four years as Speaker between 1924 and 1928. Short had considerable electoral experience and had made the preparations for the convention. While Short organized the election, the Dominions Office made its preparations. It dispatched St. John Chadwick and Edgar Jones, a Treasury official, to Newfoundland to prepare the economic report on which the convention was to base its deliberations. While the Chadwick-Jones report was being put into its final form, instructions were prepared for Fox.[21]

The *Report on the Financial and Economic Position of Newfoundland* [Chadwick-Jones] was succinct.[22] It provided a brief compendium of statistics on aspects of the Newfoundland economy, but stopped short of reaching any conclusions, and failed to add to the understanding of the economic situation. The Dominions Office had intentionally pared the report down to avoid suggesting conclusions to the Convention. The other major document to be presented to the Convention was *Newfoundland : Economic, Diplomatic, and Strategic Studies.*[23] Published under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs the book attempted to provide the historical background to Newfoundland's place in the world, and detail the state of its economy and society. It was far more detailed and illuminating than the Chadwick-Jones report, and did not fail to suggest a course for the island. The editor, R.A. MacKay, was a professor of government and political science at Dalhousie

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[20]PANL, GN 38 S2-1-22 File #5, Minutes of Commission, 21 May 1946.

[21]PRO, DO 35/1346/N402/48, Syers to Machtig, 11 June 1946.

[22]Great Britain, *Report on the Financial and Economic Position of Newfoundland* (Chadwick-Jones Report) (London : HMSO, 1946).

[23]R.A. MacKay (ed.), *Newfoundland : Economic, Diplomatic, and Strategic Studies* (Toronto : Oxford University Press, 1946).

University in Nova Scotia. He had been seconded to the Canadian Department of External Affairs, where he was an expert on Newfoundland. In fact, more than any other person, MacKay was the principal architect of Canadian policy toward Newfoundland. His conclusion was a simple one. Newfoundland's prosperity was the result of abnormal wartime conditions and the economy could not support the population at the standard of living the people had come to expect. External financial aid was required, he concluded, and the only country in a position to provide that aid was Canada. Given Canada's strategic interest in the island MacKay felt mutually agreeable terms of union could be found.[24]

The Dominions Office searched for a suitable constitutional advisor, selecting Professor Kenneth C. Wheare. A fellow of All Souls College Oxford, Wheare was a world expert on the federal system of government, and author of a standard text on that subject.[25] Wheare would take leave from Oxford University, and have his salary and travel expenses paid by the British Treasury. The Commission for its part would provide him with accommodations and an office.[26] Wheare immediately began preparing himself for questions that might be asked, particularly concerning possible financial arrangements under various "half-way house" constitutions. The Dominions Office's position was explained to Wheare, putting an end to his investigations. He agreed to be careful not to suggest that any assistance would come automatically with any such half-way house.[27]

One of the greatest concerns of Attlee and the Dominions Office was that rural Newfoundlanders, particularly fishermen, would participate in the political

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[24] *Ibid.*, p. 3-38.

[25] Kenneth C. Wheare, *Federal Government* (London : Oxford University Press, 1946).

[26] PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22 File #5, DO to Newfoundland, 28 June 1946.

[27] PRO, DO 35/1142/N402/64, Note of a meeting 20 August 1946, Wheare, Syers, Luke, Williams, and Roberts-Wray.

process by offering themselves as candidates. To this end no property qualifications or nomination fee were required. The residency qualification served to prevent St. John's residents from dominating rural elections. This met with some success, with a few fisherman and a large number of "common" people coming forward [See Appendix A]. Not surprisingly though, the bulk of the rural candidates came from the traditional political group, merchants. Some trade unionists, one of the few groups with democratic experience, also ran, both individually and as a slate in St. John's. In the capital far more candidates came from the traditional political elites of merchants, lawyers, and businessmen than was the case in rural areas. Yet public interest remained low, and there were few candidates despite the absence of a nomination fee. In eight districts only a single candidate came forward,[28] though in some districts this may have been a result of the popularity of a single candidate rather than a reticence among others about running. Gordon Bradley, a former member of the assembly and candidate for election to the convention, was concerned about the people coming forward to sit in the convention. He commented to Joseph Smallwood :

> The principle of selection of experts by popular vote is a new one to me. I cannot conceive that Downing Street does not see its weakness, and if they do, the whole thing is suspicious. Outside of Bert Butt and [Gordon] Higgins (the latter very young) the analytical faculty is not overabundant.[29]

As more candidates were nominated Bradley's concern that they were "not able to measure up to the work" increased.[30]

Candidates' motivations varied. Most were committed to the return of democracy, and a few had a strong antipathy to the Commission. For these people the Convention not only provided an opportunity to advocate self-

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[28]Joseph R. Smallwood (ed.), *Encylopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's : Newfoundland Book Publishers (1967) Ltd., 1981).

[29]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 19 March 1946. I am indebted to Mr. Gordon Bradley for making this material available, and Dr. James Hiller for bringing my attention to it.

[30]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 29 March 1946.

government, but a public platform from which to attack the Commission. Some seem to have had the interests of working people in mind, others the protection of their businesses. Undoubtedly the 15 dollars a day payment to delegates appealed to a few. Others ran in an effort to embark on, or to restart an interrupted political career.

The election campaign was like no other. With no political parties, save the nascent Labour party, candidates had little with which to rally support. Most campaigned on their personal reputations and popularity, with local issues and personalities coming into play in some districts. Though little is known of the election campaign, it seems confederation was not an issue in most districts, and all candidates appeared in favour of the return of an unspecified form of democratic government. The most notable exception was Smallwood who openly campaigned for union with Canada, both in his district, Bonavista North, and in a series of letters to the *Daily News*. Even if others did campaign for confederation, only Smallwood gained national attention by doing so.[31]

Smallwood was a late convert to confederation, having decided on this option shortly after the convention was announced. This change startled his old acquaintance Gordon Bradley, who had been a confederate for years. Smallwood had great faith in the potential for a confederate party to win, and in February, 1946, was endeavouring to set up such a party under the leadership of Commissioner of Public Health and Welfare J.C. Puddester. Bradley tried to dissuade Smallwood from supporting Puddester, whom he felt had insufficient public support to lead Newfoundland successfully into confederation. He also still resented Puddester's role in the creation of commission government. Bradley thought the formation of a political party premature. "Make haste slowly," he advised Smallwood, and "pick only men that you can trust absolutely, men whose

[31] J.R. Smallwood, *I Chose Canada*.

views are coincident (at least broadly) on matters of policy."[32] He predicted a return to graft and pork barrel politics would result from the formation of a party "gathered together merely because they want to come in."[33] Over the next few months he repeatedly warned Smallwood not to form alliances with political opportunists.[34] Whether Smallwood heeded his advice or not is unknown, but Puddester did not resign from the Commission to enter the political arena, and died 22 April, 1947.[35]

Smallwood was planning far in advance in other ways as well. He began considering ways of effecting confederation, including the despatch of delegations from the convention to London and Ottawa. The former, Bradley thought, would serve no purpose, and the latter "could only be effective under responsible government."[36] By 11 May, however, Bradley seems to have become convinced of Smallwood's view, and speculated on a possible scenario.

> My own idea was for the convention delegation to approach Canada first with a view to enlisting their sympathetic approval (unofficial of course) of our sending a delegation to London for the purpose of getting rid of a part at least and possibly the whole of the national debt. Such approval might also involve Canadian pressure on London to go as far as possible in the matter of our debt. All this of course would be quite unofficial and off the record, but it could be exceedingly valuable. Next a delegation to London to get Britain's concessions if any. Then another delegation to Ottawa to get all terms [of union] but minor details. Then the recommendation to the British Government and a ballot having appended thereto [sic] the terms agreed upon.[37]

Bradley continued by arguing that a "carefully prepared campaign of information

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[32]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 28 February 1946.

[33]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 28 February 1946.

[34]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 28 February 1946, 29 March 1946, 11 May 1946.

[35]*Evening Telegram*, 26 April 1947.

[36]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 28 February 1946.

[37]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 11 May 1946.

is essential."[38] He argued that it would be best to keep the confederation plans between themselves, until they could "get things lined up in the convention" since "a programme of the character we have in mind is in the nature of a high military secret and equally susceptible to disclosure and sabotage unless confined within a very small circle of those [whose] integrity and oneness is beyond all all [sic] possible doubt"[39]

The principal advocate of responsible government, Cashin, made no secret of where he stood. On 25 May, 1946, six days before nomination day, he announced a change in his attitude toward the Convention. In the light of the possible suppression of his radio broadcasts, he said, "if I cannot fight the cause of the people outside the Convention, I will fight it inside."[40] Thus he offered himself as a candidate for St. John's West. Though the public was being advised by newspaper editorials to look for an "open mind" in a candidate, many people knew where their candidates stood on the question of commission government or some form of democracy.

The only political party existing in 1946 was the Labour party.[41] Many in Newfoundland's labour movement were encouraged by the election of Clement Attlee's Labour government in Britain. They not only hoped for a better deal for workers, but demanded the immediate return of responsible government.[42] They also began to consider political action themselves. In August, 1945, the annual convention of the Newfoundland Federation of Labour adopted the formation of

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[38]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 11 May 1946.

[39]Bradley Papers, Bradley to Smallwood, 11 May 1946.

[40]PANL, Cashin Papers, P4/18, Radio Speech, 25 May 1946.

[41]William Gillispie, "A History of the Newfoundland Federation of Labour 1936-1963" (unpublished MA thesis, MUN, 1980).

[42]PRO, DO 35/1142/N402/40, Newfoundland Labourer's Union to DO, Newfoundland Lumberman's Association to DO, Botwood Longshoreman's Union to DO.

the St. John's District Labour Party (SJDLP), and committed itself to work towards forming a Newfoundland Labour Party.[43] In the SJDLP Newfoundland had its first post-war political party. The first flexing of the Labour party's political muscle was the St. John's municipal election of 1945, where it unsuccessfully ran a slate of candidates. The next opportunity came with the election to the national convention. On 21 March, 1946, the party issued its manifesto, a moderate social democratic platform designed to "promote political, social, and economic emancipation of the people."[44] Later the party announced a slate of candidates for the convention. Philip Forsey, a teacher, John Gibbs and John Higgins, both lawyers, would run in St. John's City West. John Higgins had to drop out and was replaced by Joseph Ashley, an electrician. In St. John's City East labour leaders William Frampton and William Gillies would run with lawyer Gordon Higgins. Charles Penny and labour leader Frank Fogwill put themselves forward in St. John's West and East Extern respectively.

That is not to say that only the Labour party had an organization. Many candidates, especially in St. John's, had committees working for their election. Campaign offices, public meetings, personal appeals, all the trappings of a general election existed. Use was also made of the new technology of radio broadcasting in St. John's. VONF provided some free air time, and the commercial station VOCM sold time. The limited range of the stations allowed only St. John's and vicinity to use this medium effectively.[45] In previous elections the newspapers had taken partisan stands, and had been one of the political battle grounds. In this election all the drama of conflict was missing, adding to the already low public interest.

The election was held on 21 June in most districts, 11 July in St. Barbe, and

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[43] *Newfoundland Federation of Labour Ninth Annual Convention*, 20 August 1945.

[44] *Evening Telegram*, 21 March 1946.

[45] Harrington interview, 22 July 1986.

White Bay, and 6 September in Labrador.[46] Turnout was poor, with fewer than two thousand people voting in most districts. About 60% voted in St. John's, and as low as 40% in some districts.[47] Of those elected almost half were from the business and mercantile class, with a quarter of the members being civil servants. An unusual aspect was the large number of union leaders elected. Six were elected in rural areas, and the Labour party were successful in electing three of their candidates.[48] The large number of union members was in part a function of the labour movement being one of the few vehicles into public life in rural Newfoundland of the 1930s and 40s. These men saw themselves as representatives of working people, and were interested in furthering the interests of their constituents. Since unions were one of the few means of achieving prominence and democratic experience in rural Newfoundland it was an obvious starting ground for those with political ambition. Apart from the representatives from labour backgrounds, several of those elected had been long term opponents of the Commission, for example, Bradley, Cashin, Crosbie, Smallwood, and Vardy.[49] The Convention was the most broadly based assembly the colony had seen in terms of class and rural representation.

Not all the delegates were idle while they waited for the Convention to convene. Smallwood began to prepare for the important role he saw for himself. With a trip to Ottawa, and letters to various Canadian officials, he began to

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[46]See Appendix A.

[47]Clarke, "Newfoundland 1934-49," p.196.

[48]David I. Jackman, President of the Wabana Mine Workers Union, Kenneth Brown, President of the Fishermens Protective Union, Pierce Fudge, President of the Newfoundland Labourers Union, Percy Figary, President of Railway Clerks Union, Charles Ballam, former President of Newfoundland Federation of Labour, William Keough, former editor of *Labour Herald*, Gordon Higgins, President of Marine Engineers Association and Labour Party candidate, and Frank Fogwill of the International Association of Machinists and Labour Party candidate.

[49]See pp.15-16 and p.18

gather as much information on the federal union option as possible.[50] His voracious appetite for information was a lifelong phenomenon, and played a crucial part in the confederation debate. With an impressive memory, and a self confidence born of a sense of destiny, he was ready to win over the delegates to confederation as they boarded the train to go to St. John's in September. One by one he attempted to convince the outport members that union with Canada offered the best opportunities for rural Newfoundland. The young reporter Donald Jamieson was on that train, and recounted Smallwood's tactics.

> He button-holed prospects in diner, smoker and pullman, where ever he could find them. When flattery was called for he was shamelessly lavish with his complements. If an appeal to ambition might produce the desired response, he hinted broadly at great rewards to come.[51]

These efforts did not end with the train trip. After settling into the Newfoundland Hotel with the other outport members, Smallwood resumed his tireless campaigning.

Shortly before the proclamation was issued summoning the first meeting of the Convention, Chairman Fox was called in to a meeting with the Commissioners to discuss procedure. It was agreed that most of the formalities customary to the former House of Assembly would be observed. It was also agreed that the Commissioners would not appear before the Convention in session, but might choose to appear before committees of the Convention to present information.[52] Fox was provided with a set of instructions from the Dominions Office, not only setting out the terms of reference, but actually dictating much of what would happen in the Convention. The document assumed that three options would be discussed : the continuation of commission government, the return of responsible government, and confederation. Furthermore, the chairman was told that when

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[50] Smallwood, *I Chose Canada*, pp. 242-243.

[51] Jamieson, "I saw the fight for Confederation," p.72.

[52] PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22 File #5, Certified copy of Minutes of Commission of Government, 9 August 1946.

confederation came to be considered, the Convention might want to send a delegation to Canada to gather information.[53] Not only was the Convention to consider all of these options, but it was "presumed that no course for which there is substantial backing would be excluded from the proposals recommended for submission to a referendum merely because it was not favoured by an actual majority of the Convention."[54]

The Dominions Office and the Commission had always moved carefully to manage their affairs in Newfoundland. Risks of opposition had been avoided, and the Convention established to abrogate the commitment to return responsible government. The Convention was designed to maximize the chances of turning Newfoundlanders attention toward confederation. Yet once established this body moved beyond government control. The Convention's own internal dynamic would dictate its course, Fox and Wheare could offer some direction, and the Dominions Office was careful to reserve the right to set the questions on the ballot for itself. Nevertheless, the policy was risky. If confederation were rejected, continued commission would probably be impractical in light of the reawakening of politics. Any form of representative government would leave the British open to criticism from the elected council each time the executive made an unpopular decision. Thus the Dominions Office would have no choice but to return responsible government despite its fear that ultimately it would have to come to Newfoundland's financial aid again. Dominions Office control over Newfoundland affairs under responsible government would be quite small, despite its determination to not allow Newfoundland to enact the operative provisions of the Statute of Westminster.[55]

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[53]PRO, DO 35/1346/N402/48, Instructions to Chairman, DO to Newfoundland, 17 June 1946.

[54]*Ibid.*

[55]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Memo from Lord Privy Seal to Prime Minister, 3 February 1948, p.807-9.

# Chapter 3

## Setting the Agenda

On 11 September, 1946, the Convention opened with all the pomp and circumstance that could be mustered. The governor arrived in full dress uniform to inspect an honour guard while the members of the Convention waited patiently in the assembly chamber. They sat in two rows of mahogany desks along either side of the room. An upper and lower gallery of guests and reporters were just inside the door, and the members of the Commission Government occupied temporary chairs inside the bar. At the far end of the room under a large mid-Victorian clock was the chairman's chair on a raised dais. To the right sat Professor Wheare, and in the center of the chamber was a table for the secretary and official reporters. Above the table a massive brass chandelier lit the room, whose windows were shrouded in heavy maroon drapes. The governor walked into this setting and delivered the opening address. He made note of the historic nature of the day's proceedings, repeated the terms of reference, and wished the Convention well.[1]

The Convention may be considered in three phases : setting the agenda, the delegations, and the confederation debate. During the first of these, which lasted from the opening of the Convention until the spring of 1947, the Convention sorted out its method of operation, and began its investigation into the state of the Newfoundland economy. But the peaceful deliberations were short lived. The introduction of a proposal to send a delegation to Ottawa to inquire into possible terms of union divided the Convention into factions. The investigative role was subsumed by the resulting partisan infighting. Despite the initial setbacks for the confederates, by the end of this period the Convention was committed to sending two delegations, one to London and one to Ottawa. However much the responsible government advocates may have disliked it, by the spring of 1947 confederation was on the agenda.

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[1]Galgay Papers, Broadcast over VONF, 11 October 1947.

Owing to the inexperience of most members, and the novelty of the task, the Convention started hesitantly. Chairman Fox proposed the appointment of a committee on rules and procedure, and a steering committee. These were both approved.[2] Subsequently the Convention divided into ten other committees to study and report on aspects of Newfoundland's economy and society.[3] The membership of each was decided by Fox in consultation with an *ad hoc* committee, and the convener of each sat on the steering committee which organized all the Convention's activities.

The committees met in the mornings to gather pertinent information, interview witnesses, and prepare questions to be asked of the Commission. The Chairman appointed an information committee to prevent duplicate questions, or those that were outside the mandate of the Convention. The Convention as a whole would meet at 3 pm each day to receive and debate progress reports. The committees started at once feverishly gathering statistics on almost every available topic, seemingly with a faith that all was quantifiable and any question answerable with empirical evidence. One of Newfoundland's problems in the past, it seemed to them, was the lack of economic data. The *Telegram* estimated that 400 questions had been submitted to the Commission Government within twelve days of the Convention starting.[4] The intention was that the report of each committee would be adopted, and conclusions incorporated into an economic report, which would address the question of the economic viability of the Newfoundland state. Undoubtedly the Dominions Office was confident of the conclusion : that the Newfoundland economy could not provide the standard of living and level of government services that the people had come to expect without assistance from outside. Since Britain had stated that no help could be expected, the Dominions Office hoped the Convention would turn to Canada.

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[2]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 12 September 1946.

[3]See Appendix B for the membership of each committee.

[4]*Evening Telegram*, 23 September 1946.

The Chairman and constitutional advisor would be in positions to provide a little prodding in this direction if necessary.

Even at this early stage F. Gordon Bradley, a prominent lawyer and businessman, and a former leader of the opposition in the House of Assembly, was apparent as a senior statesman among the Convention members. He played a large part in the committee on rules and procedure, and was selected to pilot the rules through the Convention.[5] Having had a notable political career prior to the Commission it is not surprising that the Convention members looked to him for advice almost as often as Chairman Fox. Even the Canadians noticed Bradley, and thought him the best person to lead a pro-confederation campaign.[6] He sat on the Steering Committee, together with other senior men : Peter Cashin, Kenneth Brown, Malcolm Hollett, Gorden Higgins, Pierce Fudge, and Thomas Ashbourne.[7] Cashin, Brown, and Ashbourne had been members of the House of Assembly. Fudge was president of the Newfoundland Labourers Union, and Higgins a lawyer with union affiliations. Hollett, a Rhodes Scholar, was a retired magistrate.

Soon after its opening, the Convention proceedings were broadcast over VONF, something which was to have a great impact on public awareness.[8] The idea of broadcasting the debates had been in circulation since the announcement of the Convention. Commissioner Walsh had reported the suggestion of Judge F.J. Morris that the Convention be broadcast to make the people aware of the

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[5]The rules of the former House of Assembly were used in the interim. PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 16 September 1946.

[6]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to External Affairs, 30 September 1946, p.288-291.

[7]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 17 September 1946.

[8]*Evening Telegram*, 16 September 1946.

issues.[9] R.B. Job, merchant and former member of the Legislative Council, had also advocated the broadcast of the proceedings.[10] Nothing was done to implement this idea until late in the summer of 1946, when Governor Gordon MacDonald, in a speech broadcast over VONF, emphasized the importance of publicizing the deliberations. In response to this, the general manager of VONF, William Galgay, began planning for the broadcast.[11]

Though the committees met in secret, the Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland was able to learn some of what happened; through him one can see quite early the emergence of an issue that was to dominate much of the Convention.[12] This issue was reciprocity. Cashin and Job began to question why Newfoundland territory had been given to the United States for military bases without any compensation to Newfoundland. More specifically, why had the Commission not insisted on a *quid pro quo* that would have guaranteed tariff free access to the American market for Newfoundland fish?[13] The idea was not new, and had been advocated by the Board of Trade in St. John's at the time of the bases agreement.[14] In a way it had been a part of Newfoundland's political culture since the 1890's when the Colonial Secretary Robert Bond negotiated a reciprocity treaty [the Bond-Blaine Treaty] with the United States. Hailed by many as a panacea for the island's economic troubles, and later scuttled by the

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[9]PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22 File #5, Walsh to DO, 12 January 1946.

[10]*Daily News*, 17 December 1945.

[11]He projected considerable capital outlay, and several people to cover the daily sessions and edit them down to a reasonable length for broadcast each evening. See CNS, Galgay Papers File #23, Galgay to Governors of BCN, 17 August 1946.

[12]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to External Affairs, 30 September 1946. p.288-291

[13]*Ibid.*

[14]Richard Straus "The Diplomatic Negotiations Leading to the Establishment of American Bases in Newfoundland : June 1940-April 1941" (unpublished MA thesis, MUN 1972), p.67.

Canadian government, the treaty became a focal point for resentment against Canada.[15] Shortly later another treaty, the Bond-Hay treaty, was negotiated, but was not ratified by the American Senate. The fact that the British-appointed Commission had missed the best opportunity since these abortive treaties to gain access to the huge American market was resented by some in Newfoundland.

The *quid pro quo* was debated on 11 October. R.B. Job, obsessed with the possibility of such an arrangement, introduced the idea to the Convention through the interim fisheries report on the cold storage industry. He was a generation older than than most members, and held in high regard. His position as convener of the fisheries committee allowed him a great deal of influence in shaping its report. Thus it is not surprising that the report concluded that the continuance of the fresh frozen fish industry "may depend largely upon a definite prospect for marketing facilities and particularly upon the expectation that the United States of America market will be available."[16] Newfoundland's strategic position could be used, the report argued, as the bargaining chip to gain access to this market. Most members of the Convention accepted this recommendation as the key to Newfoundland's future. As St. John's businessman A.E. Hickman put it,

> While the paper and mining industries may be the largest in certain respects, yet the fishing industry with its various types of production is our mainstay to the majority of the people in this island. ...[For this reason I support reciprocity negotiations, and] it might be wise to point out to our Canadian friends that in this instance we would not wish to have any repetition of the interference or blocking as occurred in the Bond-Blaine treaty.[17]

They not only accepted the bases for markets *quid pro quo* as feasible, but had faith that the fishery could provide an adequate standard of living for

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[15]Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, and David Davis, "The Bond-Blaine Negotiations 1890-91" (unpublished M.A. thesis MUN 1970).

[16]PANL, GN 10/C Box 5 File 4, "Interim Report of Fisheries Committee : Cold Storage Industry".

[17]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 11 October 1946. It must be kept in mind that the quality of transcription varies and quotations are often inaccurate.

Newfoundland's people. Not all members shared this faith. Smallwood, for example, argued that once the temporary food shortages created by the war were solved fish prices would fall, precipitating another crisis in Newfoundland. Besides, he argued, the United States was interested in multilateral not bilateral trade agreements, and in any case, Newfoundland did not have the bargaining strength to gain such concessions.[18]

Another issue that was to dominate the Convention, that of sending a delegation to Canada to discuss federation, was introduced on 1 October 1946.[19] This not only occupied much of the attention of the members, but disturbed the functioning of the committees. During a secret meeting of the steering committee Chairman Fox raised the question of sending a delegation to Ottawa to discuss federation with Canada. Peter Cashin insisted this was outside the jurisdiction of the Convention, but Bradley, who had been an advocate of confederation for years,[20] thought it was a good idea. However, Bradley argued that their first duty was to examine the financial and economic position, and any delegation should wait until this had been accomplished.[21] Although Bradley's view won out, the delegation question did not wait until the Convention's work was done, possibly because Bradley reported the meeting to fellow confederate Joseph Smallwood. On 25 October Smallwood put a motion to the steering committee for inclusion in the orders of the day for 28 October. He proposed that a delegation be sent to Ottawa to ascertain what terms of union might be offered. The constitutional advisor, K.C. Wheare, was of the opinion, probably correct, that Smallwood was apprehensive that someone other than himself would

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[18] *Ibid.*

[19] PANL, GN 10/C Box 6 File 7, Meeting of Steering Committee, 1 October 1946.

[20] For example see F.G. Bradley "The Case For Unbiased Consideration : A Reply to the Case Against Confederation", in *Fisherman's Advocate* 7,14,21, and 28 March 1941.

[21] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to External Affairs, 3 October 1946, p.292-3.

introduce this motion, and he would miss the publicity of introducing it himself.[22] This would have been important to the ambitious Smallwood, who wanted to be the leader of the confederate forces. After considerable discussion the steering committee decided to let the resolution go ahead.[23] In allowing this resolution they breached their own rules of procedure by not having Smallwood give notice of motion, a matter that was resolved by the Chairman asking for the unanimous consent of the Convention to move the motion without notice.[24] Thus when Smallwood rose to make his motion, everyone knew what he was about to propose. Few knew how controversial his speech was to be, and none foresaw the impact it would have on the rest of the Convention's work.

The theme of Smallwood's speech was a simple one, Newfoundland had a lower standard of living than the rest of North America, and independence could only perpetuate this lower standard. With typical hyperbole he made his case:

> Compared with the mainland of North America we are 50 years, in some things a hundred years, behind the times. We live more poorly, more shabbily, more meanly. Our life is more a struggle. Our struggle is tougher, more naked, more hopeless. In the North American family Newfoundland bears the reputation of having the lowest standards of life, of being the least progressive and advanced ... We can, of course, persist in isolation, a dot on the shore of North America, the Funks of the North American continent, struggling vainly to support ourselves and our greatly expanded public services. Reminded continually by radio, movie, and visitor of greatly higher standards of living across the gulf, we can shrug incredulously or dope ourselves into the hopeless belief that such things are not for us.[25]

Confederation on the other hand, Smallwood suggested, would allow Newfoundlanders a higher standard of living than they had ever experienced.

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[22]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner to Newfoundland to External Affairs, 4 November, 1946, p.316-17.

[23]PANL, GN 10/C Box 6 File 7, "Meeting of Steering Committee 25 October 1946".

[24]*Ibid.*, 28 October 1946.

[25]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 28 October 1946.

The response to Smallwood's motion and speech was swift and angry. The young reporter and member for St. John's East, Michael Harrington set the tone of the debate. The motion was premature, he felt, and confederation should not be discussed until the Convention had completed its primary task - deciding whether or not Newfoundland was self-sufficient. He also accused Smallwood of attempting to bribe him into supporting the motion by promising him a place on the delegation to Ottawa.[26] These sentiments were echoed by one speaker after another as the majority of the members attacked the motion, and Smallwood's tactic of promising trips to Ottawa, senatorships, and cabinet portfolios.[27] Pierce Fudge in particular took exception to Smallwood's remarks about Newfoundland being behind the times.[28] A minority supported the motion, thinking that the Convention needed to know the terms that Canada might offer before making any recommendations, and not seeing that any purpose would be served by delay. During one of these heated debates Kenneth Brown suffered a stroke while speaking, and was never able to return to the Convention.[29] His district, Bonavista South, went without representation for the rest of the life of the Convention. Charles Penney quickly moved an amendment to delay any such delegation until the committee work was finished.[30] As the debate continued, and overwhelming support for Penney's amendment became apparent, Gordon Bradley entered the fray. He proposed an amendment to approve the delegation immediately, but delay its dispatch until the end of the committee work. This attempt to save the Smallwood motion failed; but brought Bradley's pro-confederate sympathies into the open for the first time in the Convention.[31]

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[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*, See especially speeches of Hollett 28 October, Job 29 October, and Cashin 29 October.

[28] *Ibid.*, 28 October 1946.

[29] *Ibid.*, 30 October 1946.

[30] *Ibid.*, 28 October 1946.

[31] *Ibid.*, 4 November 1946.

When on 5 November the resolution and two amendments came to a vote the division of the Convention into two blocks, one pro and one anti-confederate, became apparent.[32] Smallwood's motion and Bradley's amendment lost by 17 votes to 25, while Penney's delaying amendment was carried 25 to 18.[33] The division brought into the open factions that had been crystallized during the debate. The confederate group was much smaller than the responsible government supporters, but was united. The responsible government group contained many who were unwilling to follow Cashin's lead, and they operated under the control of a loose committee at best. In addition to the hard-core confederate and responsible government factions, there existed a group whose support for one form of government or the other was weak. Some may also have favoured continued commission government; and R.B. Job favoured a form of modified commission for a period of time. Had Smallwood not forced the issue with such an inflammatory speech some of these moderate members might yet have been won over to the confederate side. Persuasion, and the force of the mounting evidence on the precarious state of Newfoundland's economy, might have been effective. However, few liked his attempt to usurp the role of the Convention. The battle lines had been drawn.

Professor Wheare, who had taken over from the governor the task of reporting events in the Convention to Britain, felt Smallwood's "ill timed" resolution and "truculent" speech set back the cause of confederation by months. The Dominions Office still thought the situation hopeful, despite the fact that their timetable for the referendum had to be revised from late May to October 1947. "No suspicion must be allowed to grow in their minds that we are

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[32] *Ibid.*, 5 November 1946.

[33] Supporting Penney's Amendment were : Penney, Fowler, Cashin, Jackman, Job, Dawe, Hollett, Fudge, Northcott, Butt, Harrington, Hickman, Fogwill, Jones, Kennedy, Hannon, Figary, Cranford, Reddy, Crosbie, Bailey, Goodridge, Crummey, McCormack, and Roberts. Opposing were : Smallwood, Starkes, Higgins, Vincent, Newell, Vardy, Miller, Keough, Ashbourne, MacDonald, Burry, Watton, Bradley, McCarthy, Ryan, Spencer, Ballam, and Hillier. Source, *Evening Telegram*, 6 November 1946.

attempting to rush them into a decision," the Dominions Office noted. "It would seem far better to allow things to develop slowly."[34]

Now that the Convention had gotten underway the Canadian government officials began to prepare for the possibility that a delegation seeking terms of union might be sent by the Convention. On 30 October the cabinet decided to welcome any such delegation, and established an interdepartmental committee to prepare reports on possible terms, legal procedure, and the tactics to be used in the discussions.[35] The first meeting of the committee took place on 9 November, and it continued to meet on a regular basis until the summer of 1947.[36]

The debates on committee reports had resumed when Chairman Fox died on 16 November.[37] While the Convention continued under the temporary chairmanship of the Secretary, Gordon Warren, the Commission considered a replacement. The National Convention Act provided that a judge of the Supreme Court should be chairman, but none of the judges was suitable. Justice Brian Dunfield was already overburdened, and Chief Justice Edward Emerson and Harry Winter, Fox's replacement on the bench, were both former members of the Commission government.[38] The Commission feared that a former commissioner would be in a difficult position as chairman of the unruly Convention. It occurred to the Commission that a chairman elected from among the Convention members would have an advantage in maintaining control over the proceedings for two reasons. First, since he was the delegates' own choice he would have some moral persuasiveness, and second he would already be aware of what had previously

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[34]PRO, DO 35/1351/N402/71, Memo on Newfoundland Affairs, 15 November 1946.

[35]Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*, p.172.

[36]Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*, p.182.

[37]*Evening Telegram*, 16 November 1946.

[38]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings (Informal Sitting), 23 November 1946.

taken place.[39] On 23 November the steering committee was summoned by the Commissioner for Home Affairs and Education, A.J. Walsh, to discuss Fox's replacement. Walsh asked if the delegates wanted to elect their own chairman or have one appointed.[40] It seems likely that Walsh hoped that the Convention would adopt the idea that it might elect its own chairman, solving the Commission's dilemma. That afternoon the Convention met in an informal sitting to discuss the issue. Peter Cashin started the proceedings by moving that Gordon Bradley be elected, and the Commission be asked to appoint him Chairman.[41] Cashin, one of the principal responsible government advocates in the Convention, probably thought that removing the most respected confederate from active debate was a good tactical move. The confederates probably reasoned that one of their own in the chair was advantageous. Support for Bradley came from both factions, and a motion to ask for his appointment was passed unanimously. Bradley accepted the position, with the proviso that he not be required to relinquish his rights as a member to speak and vote.[42]

Before this could be effected however, permission had to be gained from the Dominions Office. The Commission dispatched Wheare to London to discuss the appointment of Bradley, and the possibility of elections to replace deceased members. Wheare reiterated his views, and the opinion of the Commission, that each of the judges was unsuitable for the chairmanship, and that Bradley was the only member of the Convention with the requisite standing and experience.[43] The Dominions Office accepted the force of these arguments; and since the

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[39]PANL, GN 38 S-2-1-22 File #5, Governor to DO, 27 November 1946.

[40]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings (Informal Sitting), 23 November 1946.

[41]*Ibid.*

[42]*Ibid.*

[43]PRO, DO 35/1142/N402/73, Note of a meeting between Wheare, Syers, and Tait on 26 November 1946.

Convention, the Commission, the governor, and Wheare all agreed to Bradley's appointment, thought it best to approve the policy.[44] The Dominions Office later agreed to allow Bradley to read the note of guidance that they had prepared for Fox.[45] Two other matters were also discussed. Wheare thought it likely that the Convention would be completed by Easter, 1947, and that the timetable for the referendum should be revised accordingly. The Dominions Office also approved the idea of providing for elections to replace deceased members, though the Commission later decided to take no action on this.[46]

The appointment of Bradley gave the confederate cause a boost. Though the responsible government faction's hope that he would be removed from the debate was to an extent realized, his position automatically made him the chairman of any possible delegation to Canada to inquire into possible terms of union. His confederate sympathies would give such a delegation a greater chance of obtaining concessions acceptable to Newfoundlanders. His appointment also left vacant the position of convener of the transportation and communication committee. When Smallwood was elected convener of that committee by its members, he gained a seat on the steering committee.[47] This allowed Smallwood, another committed confederate, a role in setting the agenda of the Convention.

Bradley assumed the chair on 8 January 1947. Despite his being an effective chairman, the debates were often marked by "fierce and hostile" criticism of the Commission.[48] Many members of the Convention were suspicious

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[44]PRO, DO 35/1142/N402/73, Syers to Machtig, 29 November 1946, and DO to Governor, 2 December 1946.

[45]PRO, DO 35/1351/N402/71, Note of a discussion between Wheare, Tait, and Syers, 16 December 1946, and DO to Newfoundland, 18 December 1946. See Chapter Two for a discussion of the note of guidance.

[46]PRO, DO 35/1142/N402/73, Governor to DO, 5 December 1946.

[47]PANL, GN 10 Box 6 File 7, Meeting of Steering Committee, 10 December 1946.

[48]PRO, DO 35/1142/N402/73, Newfoundland to DO, 14 December 1946.

of the Commission's motives, and did not hesitate to go beyond their mandate by criticizing current policy. For example, an angry reaction was elicited in response to rumours that the Commission was intending to sign a contract with an American company interested in developing Labrador. The Convention unanimously passed a motion informing the Commission that, in the Convention's opinion, there should be no negotiations resulting in the disposal of assets either in Newfoundland or Labrador until the people of Newfoundland had decided on a form of government.[49] Despite this hostility toward the Commission, work was proceeding well as the Convention closed for Christmas.

Not all of Newfoundland's political life was centered in the Convention. In late December some prominent people in St. John's began preparations to launch an organization dedicated to the return of responsible government.[50] The group included many members of the St. John's merchant community, for example Charles Hunt, James and Lewis Ayre, Harold Macpherson, Charles R. Bell, and F.M. O'Leary. The labour movement was represented by Leo Earle, president of the Longshoremen's Protective Union. A.M. Fraser of Memorial University College, and John Currie and Albert Perlin, the editor and assistant editor of the *Daily News* respectively, also became members.[51] The business establishment feared that the removal of tariff barriers under confederation would result in the collapse of the small manufacturing sector that existed in St. John's, as had happened in the Canadian maritime provinces. The old mercantile community was notoriously wary of government meddling in the fish export trade, and feared the control of this industry passing into federal hands. In a specific sense they worried about the future of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board. Although it is

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[49]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 12 December 1946.

[50]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to External Affairs, 23 December 1946, p.366-7.

[51]CNS, Responsible Government League Papers (RGL), File "Founding of the Responsible Government League,", Sponsors of Declaration mailed to potential supporters.

true that "Water Street" had definite ideas about its own, and thus Newfoundland's, best interest, the members of this group had more than personal motives. Most genuinely believed self-government was best for Newfoundland; a romantic and nationalistic feeling, perhaps, but one deeply felt none the less. The impetus for the birth of the league may have been Smallwood's ill-timed confederation speech. Since 1933 it had been assumed that responsible government would be returned once Newfoundland was again self-supporting. Now, because of the threat posed by the confederates, it was possible that responsible government might not be reestablished. To offset this danger, many people felt that preparations should be made for the upcoming referendum. Perhaps some also feared that the responsible government advocates would not be a match for the confederates. A third possibility was that "Water Street" was frightened by the emergence of the unpredictable Peter Cashin as the leading advocate of responsible government. They may have wanted their own political force to help ensure that a more suitable person, perhaps Crosbie, would assume the premiership under responsible government if and when it was returned.

The nascent League worked in secret into the new year, preparing for its first meeting. Even before becoming public, the League was criticized for this secrecy and for usurping the role of the Convention by advocating one form of government before the Convention had finished its work.[52] On 11 February, 1947, the Responsible Government League was launched at a meeting at the Newfoundland Hotel. F.M. O'Leary, who had been interested in the return of responsible government for many years, and had been on the executive of the earlier Newfoundland National Association, was elected provisional president, and J.T. Cheeseman, a merchant and former House of Assembly member, vice president.[53] Members were then appointed to four committees, Constitution,

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[52]Letter to Editor from P. Forsey, in *Evening Telegram*, 7 January 1947.

[53]See pp. 21-22 for Newfoundland National Association.

Policy, Membership, and Information, and the meeting dissolved.[54] During its first few months the task of organizing took up most of the League's efforts. Each committee then began to prepare plans for its area of responsibility. They decided to finance themselves by voluntary subscription, and began to search for an office and secretary.[55] By 4 March a constitution, and a mail-out declaration requesting support, had been approved.[56] The constitution set out the form of the League. Open to all citizens of Newfoundland, the it was devoted to the return of responsible government. The executive was to be elected annually, and was responsible for the administration of the League and its monies. It also appointed committees and delegated duties as it saw fit. The League was non-sectarian, non-party, and non-profit.[57] This quiet beginning was the birth of a major political force in Newfoundland. While the League organized and raised funds, the Convention continued to study the economy and society.

When the Convention reconvened after the Christmas recess on 8 January, 1947, the tone of debate continued to be contentious, so much so that the steering committee decided to have a private session to discuss raising the level of debate.[58] But one result of the argumentative style of the proceedings was the great popularity of the Convention's broadcasts. It was reported that thousands of people listened keenly to the debates each evening.[59] Not all people approved of the argumentative style of the proceedings, and some objected to the rejection of the confederation option by a group identified with the commercial interests in

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[54]CNS, RGL Papers, File "Executive Committee Minutes", Minutes of Executive Meeting, 11 February 1947.

[55]*Ibid.*, 20 February 1947.

[56]*Ibid.*, 4 March 1947.

[57]*Ibid.*, Constitution of Responsible Government League.

[58]PANL, GN 10/C Box 6, Meeting of Steering Committee, 10 January 1947.

[59]*Evening Telegram*, 7 January 1947.

St. John's.[60]

In January, 1947, R.B. Job published *A Pamphlet on the idea of a 'Partly Internationalized' Newfoundland.*[61] In this he intended to "bring before the delegates to the Convention and the people of Newfoundland" his argument that Newfoundland's strategic position was important enough to warrant financial concessions from each of the three major North Atlantic powers, Canada, Britain, and the United States.[62] He suggested that a joint advisory council consisting of representatives from Great Britain, Canada, and the United States of America might sponsor responsible government. Perhaps the council would have partial control over Newfoundland's financial and external policies, he mused, and in exchange "pay a substantial amount which might enable us to abolish customs duties."[63] This arrangement would allow the continuance of responsible government in domestic matters. Job clung to this hope despite having been advised by Raymond Gushue, the head of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, that it could not be realized. In his testimony to the Convention's fisheries committee Gushue had argued that any tariff advantages conceded to Newfoundland would be granted to Canada and Iceland as well; moreover, the United States "maintain the position that you could not trade military or strategic considerations with trade considerations."[64] Many others were not convinced by Job's idea. The *Evening Telegram* suggested "The sooner we in Newfoundland abandon dreams of benevolence and get down to realities, the greater is the chance of solving the

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[60]Letter to Editor from W. Shears, Stephenville Crossing, *Evening Telegram*, 20 January 1947.

[61]Robert B. Job, *A Pamphlet on the idea of a "Partly Internationalized" Newfoundland* (St. John's : Job, 1947).

[62]*Ibid.*

[63]*Ibid.*

[64]PANL, GN 10/C Box 12, Minutes of Fisheries Committee, 23 October 1946.

problems."[65] Undaunted, Job persisted his attempts to achieve such a *quid pro quo*.

On 4 February Job moved that the Convention ascertain the steps that might be taken to improve the economic and fiscal relationship between Newfoundland and the United States, what financial and fiscal relationship might exist between Newfoundland and the United Kingdom, and what would be a fair and equitable basis for federal union with Canada.[66] The last two clauses were an attempt to garner support for his motion from both the confederate and responsible government advocates. Though the two most prominent responsible government supporters, Hollett and Cashin, opposed the motion, it passed 30 to 7.[67] In accordance with this motion the Convention elected a committee to discuss with the Commission Government how these questions might best be answered.[68] The Commission met the committee 8 February, and informed it that any discussions relating to the economic or fiscal relationship between Newfoundland and the United States would have to be handled through diplomatic channels between governments. Thus this matter was not within the mandate of the Convention. The Convention could send a delegation to Canada to discuss confederation, however, since this was a form of government. As for a delegation to London, it would be allowed as long as it was preceded by "a detailed memorandum setting forth precisely the questions on which information is sought."[69] The Commission hoped Job would introduce a motion to send delegations to London and Ottawa.

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[65] *Evening Telegram*, 20 February 1947.

[66] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 4 February 1947.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] The delegation consisted of Job, Crosbie, Higgins, Ashbourne, Smallwood, Newell, and Fogwill. *Ibid.*, 7 February 1947.

[69] PANL, GN 38, Minutes of Commission, 8 February 1947.

Job was so chagrined that the Commission had not allowed a delegation to the United States that he refused to introduce any motion that did not include such a delegation to the United States. The Canadian High Commissioner thought Job's refusal threatened the possibility of a delegation to Canada, since the motion would be more likely to be passed if Job, rather than a confederate, moved it.[70] In an effort to persuade Job to support a delegation motion that did not include a delegation to Washington, he was promised a place on the delegation to Britain.[71] It was hoped that the promise that he would be able to discuss the *quid pro quo* with the Dominions Office directly would be enough to convince Job to introduce a motion. When this failed, Bradley appealed to the Commission once more, to no avail, to have a delegation to Washington allowed.[72] The efforts to convince Job to introduce a modified motion having failed, he reported to the Convention on 26 February that the Commission had rejected the motion.[73]

It was thus left to the two principal factions to introduce their own motions. In the first of these Malcolm Hollett gave notice of a motion to send a delegation of six elected members and the chairman to London to enquire into the national debt, military bases, the Gander airport, the interest-free loans Newfoundland had made to Britain, and any other matters relating to the future economic position of Newfoundland.[74] The confederate faction was also ready with a motion. Smallwood gave notice he would p. )pose that after the London delegation had returned, a delegation would go to Ottawa to ascertain what basis might exist for

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[70]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner to Newfoundland to External Affairs, 12 February 1947, p.391-392.

[71]Unfortunately it is not known who made this effort. *Ibid.*, 8 February 1947, p. 388-389.

[72]*Ibid.*, 12 February 1947, p.391-392.

[73]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 26 February 1947.

[74]*Ibid.*

union.[75] The following day Hollett's motion passed quickly, the confederates supporting it in hope of having their own motion supported by the responsible government faction. Job seconded Smallwood's motion, and many of the moderate members of the Convention professed support. The leaders of the anti-confederates in the Convention, especially Cashin and Hollett, attacked the motion. In a bitter speech against confederation Cashin insisted that the Convention "had no authority to give the country away." He also attacked the Commission as being brought about by bribery and corruption, claiming that Chief Justice Emerson and Justice Harry Winter had been bribed with promises of being made commissioners into voting for the suspension of responsible government.[76] This accusation enraged Winter, who brought a libel case against Cashin.[77] The debate on Smallwood's motion continued late into the night, eventually passing 24-16.[78] A.B. Perlin, journalist and member of the Responsible Government League, reported that some of the anti-confederate members of the Convention had voted in favour of Smallwood's motion hoping to get the matter over with.[79]

On 11 April, 1947, D.I. Jackman, trade union official and member for Bell Island, proposed that a delegation, like the ones to Ottawa and London, be sent to Washington to determine if the United States were interested in political union

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[75] *Ibid.*

[76] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 28 February 1947.

[77] Cashin defended himself in court, claiming parliamentary privilege for statements made in the Convention. See PANL, "Address to Jury" Cashin Papers P4/18. Justice Dunfield rejected this argument, insisting the Convention was only a debating society and had no powers of any kind. See Justice Dunfield's address to jury in *Evening Telegram*, 19 April 1947. Despite Dunfield's ruling, and the playing of the recorded speech in court, the jury was unwilling to convict Cashin.

[78] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 28 February 1947.

[79] "Wayfarer", 5 March 1947, in Francis Hollohan and Melvin Baker, *A Clear Head in Tempestuous Times*, (St. John's : Harry Cuff Publications, 1986), p.52.

with Newfoundland. Though trade discussions were clearly beyond the terms of reference of the Convention, discussions on political union could clearly be held. Jackman said he did not advocate joining the United States himself, but felt that since many of his constituents were in favour of such a union, a delegation to Washington should be dispatched. The motion was defeated 34 to 3, with Bradley exercizing his right to vote for the first time by voting against it.[80] Slightly later, on 22 May, Penny moved that a delegation be sent to the United States to negotiate reciprocity. Bradley ruled that this was beyond the terms of reference of the Convention, and could not be entertained. The responsible government group succeeded in overruling Bradley on this point.[81] But the Commission insisted this was beyond the terms of reference, and denied permission.[82]

The Dominions Office hesitated over allowing Hollett's delegation, but Wheare and the Commission warned that considering local circumstances a refusal to receive the London delegation would endanger the delegation to Canada.[83] The Dominions Office accepted that the delegation would have to be received, and turned its attention to the management of both delegations. They felt that "it would be easier for us tactically" if the same people made up both delegations, and if the delegation to Ottawa preceded the delegation to London.[84] They also suggested that a Newfoundland Commissioner, perhaps Walsh, accompany the delegation to aid the Dominions Office in the discussions.[85] The Commission approved the idea of having Walsh go to London, and brought

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[80] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 11 April 1947.

[81] *Ibid.*, 22 May 1947.

[82] *Ibid.*, 26 May 1947.

[83] PRO, DO 35/3446/N4005/13, Newfoundland to DO, 4 March 1947.

[84] *Ibid.*, DO to Newfoundland, 7 March 1947.

[85] *Ibid.*

Bradley in to discuss the delegations. Despite their wishes, Bradley informed them that the Convention had unanimously decided on separate delegations, and that the London delegation was to take precedence.[86]

While the Dominions Office prepared for the delegation, Hollett drafted the memorandum on the matters to be discussed that had been requested by the Dominions Office. The steering committee rejected the memo on 7 March as "too long and slightly argumentative."[87] It was redrafted by Hollett, Higgins, Butt, and Smallwood and adopted by the Convention on 10 March.[88] The memorandum asked six questions, the seventh category being other matters related to the economic future of Newfoundland. It asked if part of Newfoundland's sterling debt might be cancelled, perhaps against the interest free loans made to Britain. They also wondered if Britain might start paying interest on these loans now that the war had ended. The delegation wanted to know what development loans might be made available, and if a *quid pro quo* with the United States, as envisaged by Job, was possible. The proportion of the operating deficit of the Gander airport for which the Newfoundland treasury would be responsible was another question. Finally they inquired into the tariff concessions that Britain might make to an independent Newfoundland.[89] To sum up, they wanted to know the extent of the financial help from Britain that might be expected under responsible government.

On 19 March those members willing to serve on the London delegation put their names forward for election.[90] Most of them received hardly any support,

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[86] *Ibid.*, Newfoundland to DO, 8 March 1947.

[87] PANL, GN 10/C Box 6, Meeting of Steering Committee, 7 March 1947.

[88] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 10 March 1947.

[89] PANL, GN 10/B Box 2, "Matters to be discussed by the Newfoundland Delegation to London."

[90] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 19 March 1947.

with the leading responsible government advocates receiving almost all of the votes.[91] Wheare informed the Dominions Office of the makeup of the delegation. Cashin, Crosbie, Hollett, and Fudge were in favour of responsible government, he reported, and Butt professed an open mind but would likely follow their lead. Keough, he felt, was the representative of the confederates on the delegation, and Bradley, the chairman, would attempt "to control the strongest advocates of responsible government."[92] The overwhelming support received by Cashin was a reflection of the confederates' hope that he would be "swiftly handled," and return home convinced that confederation would be best.[93] The confederates also undoubtedly wanted to remain behind to increase their chances of election to the Ottawa delegation. Smallwood, for example, did not even nominate himself.[94]

Early in its life the Convention split into two factions over the confederation issue. This division disrupted the investigative role of the body, and caused the debates to degenerate largely into political infighting and posturing. This is not to say that prior to the first Smallwood motion all was quiet and polite. For those who were using the Convention to embark on a political career, the name of the game had always been to attack the Commission, the Dominions Office, or other any other target that might attract public attention. The use of committee reports to justify one's own preference for a particular form of government had also been a common tactic, for example, Job had used the cold storage report to encourage the idea of tariff-free access to the American market. The responsible government majority successfully stopped the Ottawa delegation the first time, but the issue came up again in the new year. After a series of motions two

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[91]The vote was as follows : Cashin 28, Crosbie 25, Butt 21, Hollett 21, Fudge 19, Keough 17, and alternatives Job and Crummey 16 and 14 respectively. Source, PANL, GN 10/E, Draft Minutes of Frank Ryan (the Convention's Assistant Secretary).

[92]PRO, DO 65/3446/N2005/13, Wheare to Syers, 20 March 1947.

[93]*Ibid.*

[94]PANL, GN 10/E, Draft Minutes of Frank Ryan.

delegations were approved, one to London, one to Ottawa. Responsible government supporters hoped the London delegation would gain from the Dominions Office the promise of financial security that was needed to convince Newfoundlanders they would prosper under responsible government. They also hoped the Ottawa delegation would fail to return with adequate terms of union, killing the confederation issue. The confederates hoped that the London delegation would return convinced Britain could not be expected to offer any help, and that the Ottawa delegation would return bearing terms acceptable to the Newfoundland people. With these hopes the Convention moved into the delegation phase.

# Chapter 4

## The Delegations

The second phase of the Convention lasted through the summer of 1947. It consisted of two trips abroad to gather the material necessary to make the case for responsible government and Confederation. The responsible government group went to London, and attempted to gain concessions from Britain that would facilitate an economic recovery under responsible government. They then compiled the financial and economic reports to substantiate their claim that Newfoundland was self-sufficient. The confederates negotiated possible terms of union with Canada, and returned with a full exposition of the benefits of confederation. Thus, this phase ended with the completion of the cases for confederation and responsible government.

On 1 April, 1947, the Canadian government notified the Convention that it was willing to receive a delegation. It suggested that the complexity and significance of the talks required a "complete and comprehensive exchange of information and a full and careful argument by both parties of all issues involved."[1] This the Convention accepted, and began electing the membership of the Ottawa delegation. This time it was the principal responsible government advocates who chose not to put their names forward. Elected were Higgins, Ashbourne, Smallwood, Job, Burry, and Ballam.[2] They were all confederates except Job and Higgins, who came top of the poll, the responsible government faction having chosen the latter as their representative on the delegation. Job later had to withdraw to attend to his business, and was replaced by Crummey,

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[1] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to Governor, 1 April 1947, p.435.

[2] Higgins received 28 votes, Ashbourne 26, Smallwood 25, Job 23, Burry 17, and Ballam and Crummey tied at 16 votes apiece. Source, PANL, GN 10/E, Frank Ryan's Draft Minutes.

another responsible government advocate.[3] The delegation then began gathering the needed information, and requested the secondment of three government officials to aid the discussions in Ottawa. They considered it "necessary for their deliberation" that the assessor of taxes, and an official from each of the departments of finance and customs, accompany them to Ottawa.[4] The Commission thought the delegation itself capable of gathering any information needed, and was willing to send any additional information by telegraph.[5] The request denied, the delegates went ahead without the participation of government officials. When the delegation departed for London, those left behind who were not busy preparing for the Ottawa visit needed something to keep them productively occupied. The Convention members remaining in St. John's divided into new committees to consolidate the committee reports.[6]

Smallwood was not content to just prepare for the Ottawa delegation; he also attempted to ensure that the London delegation would be unsuccessful. Unwilling to risk a British offer of financial aid to Newfoundland, he wrote Louis St. Laurent, the Canadian Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, asking him to warn the British to not hold out any hope of continuing commission government for a fixed period. He thought that Newfoundlanders would accept such an offer, since it would delay a final decision : this would destroy his confederation plans.[7] He did not know the British and Canadian intentions; if he had, he would not have worried. The Canadian cabinet had already decided to welcome Newfoundland into confederation, and

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[3]PANL, GN 10/B Box 4, "Documents : Memos and Correspondence," R.B. Job to Bradley, 29 May 1947.

[4]PANL, GN 10/B Box 4, Warren to Carew, May 27 1947.

[5]PANL, GN 38, Minutes of Commission, 30 May 1947.

[6]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 25 April 1947.

[7]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Smallwood to St. Laurent, 21 March 1947, p.414-415.

had suggested to Britain that any inquiry into financial assistance should meet a reply that "would be of such a nature as to discourage, and if possible kill altogether, any expectation that the island might be able to look to the UK for financial help in the future."[8] This was in line with the Dominions Office's intentions.

As the delegations prepared and the committee reports continued to be debated, the Dominions Office brought together a committee to consider its response to the London delegation.[9] The committee first of all elicited the Commission's observations on the Convention's questions. The Commission realized that the best way of pursuing the British policy of encouraging Newfoundlanders to consider confederation was to offer no hope of aid. The Commission therefore advised that Britain's financial position, especially the shortage of dollars, made the Convention's requests for aid unreasonable. No portion of the sterling debt should be cancelled, and Britain should not commence interest payments on the loans Newfoundland made during the war. The Commission did not object to a cancellation of part of the public debt in return for forgiveness of the interest free loans, but felt the Dominions Office should remember that Britain had not asked Newfoundland to pay interest on a similar loan made to the colony in 1917. It felt that development loans were an unreasonable request, since "the suggestion has been made, though it has not been possible to confirm it, that the fishing industry has ample financial capital resources but is unwilling to risk them."[10] In their haste to support the Dominions Office's plan to answer the London delegation with a resounding "no", it seems the Commission forgot its own reconstruction plan. Furthermore, Britain's best interest, not Newfoundland's, was uppermost in its mind.

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[8]PRO, DO 35/3444/N2005/1, British High Commissioner in Canada (Clutterbuck) to Dominions Office, 2 January 1947.

[9]PRO, DO 35/3446/N2005/13, Machtig to Barlow (Treasury), 20 March 1947.

[10]PANL, GN 38 S-3-5-4 File 21, Governor to Dominions Office, 11 April 1947.

In preparation for the arrival of the delegation, Wheare advised the Dominions Office to keep in mind a rift in the responsible government ranks. The merchants who backed responsible government, while willing to work with Cashin, favored Chesley Crosbie for the premiership. A result of this, as Wheare pointed out, was that Cashin and Crosbie were not in each other's confidence.[11] Cashin was of notoriously unpredictable temper, and was seen as undesirable by the St. John's elite; while Crosbie, a member of the Water Street mercantile class, was unlikely to threaten their interests.[12] Cashin could not be cut adrift, however, since he was a passionate orator compared to the quiet Crosbie, and had a large personal following. An uneasy alliance seems to have existed between the two, each needing the other.

The London delegation hoped that it would be successful in eliciting a promise of British aid. However, from the moment the members arrived in London they had the impression that their hopes might not be realized. After being met at the airport by a minor official, Rear Admiral Sir Arthur Bromley, they arrived at their hotel to find an error had been made in the reservations. Though alternate accommodations were soon found, the responsible government advocates thought that they were intentionally being treated poorly, an impression that continued to grow. The delegation met Addison, Machtig, Parliamentary Undersecretary A.G. Bottomly, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Member of Parliament Glenvil Hall, G. St. John Chadwick, and a representative of the Treasury, W. Russell-Edmonds, four times between 29 April and 7 May. A.J. Walsh and Sir Gordon Macdonald also attended to aid the Dominions Office in answering the delegation's questions.[13]

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[11]PRO, DO 35/3446/N2005/13, Wheare to Syers, 20 March 1947.

[12]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Mackay to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, 27 May 1947, p.481-482.

[13]*Evening Telegram*, 12 May 1947.

At the first meeting on 29 April the delegation was given the opportunity to elaborate on each of its questions, explaining precisely what they wanted. Crosbie and Cashin proposed that Britain reduce Newfoundland's interest payments by three or three and a half million dollars per year by applying the interest free loans against the public debt. This money, they argued, could then be used to develop the fishery. Glenvil Hall maintained that this could not be done.

> We are, as Lord Addison said, in a jam, otherwise we would meet Newfoundland with open arms. We were delighted and very grateful for the interest-free loans which you made in our hour of need, and we honour our bond, but at the same time it is very difficult for us to find dollars, very difficult indeed.[14]

Though the discussions were polite and calm, the British gave the Newfoundland delegation little reason for hope in their verbal responses.[15]

Controversy arose over the recording of the secret meetings. After the first meeting Bradley asked if a verbatim transcript would be made available. Though he was told it would be, the Dominions Office hesitated on the grounds that the publication of an account of the meetings might be embarrassing to the British government. Bradley tried to force the issue by bringing Mrs. Finn, the delegation's stenographer, to the next meeting.[16] Eventually the Dominions Office decided to allow the delegation to circulate their own copies, and would reserve the "more accurate and official versions" with a "number of excisions" to settle questions that might arise.[17] Despite this decision, the transcripts were never released.

The Dominions Office and Treasury had consulted on their answers before the delegation arrived, since they felt "that a firm statement was necessary to put

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[14] PANL, Walsh Papers, P4/36 Box 4 File 5, Meeting of London Delegation, 29 April 1947.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] PRO, DO 35/3448/N2005/24, ? to Tait, 2 May 1947.

[17] *Ibid.*, Tait to Syers, 11 June 1947.

the whole talks in the right perspective (not omitting a rebuke)."[18] These answers, in a memorandum circulated to the delegation after the first meeting, mimicked almost exactly the Commission's suggestions. The 1917 loan and the dollar situation were mentioned, and the Dominions Office explained it was impossible for Britain to assume the sterling debt. As for the payment of interest on the interest free loans, the Dominions Office insisted that this was impossible, and reminded the delegation that the Commission had made these loans because Britain was financing Newfoundland's war effort.[19] This was a reference to the two British artillery regiments and one Royal Air Force squadron that were staffed primarily with Newfoundlanders. As for development loans, "such assistance would not seem to arise in view of the ample funds available to the Newfoundland government."[20] Modification of the bases agreement could be achieved only with the consent of the United States, something that was unlikely, and the financing of the Gander airport was still being negotiated. With reference to the delegation's questions on trade and tariffs, the dollar situation precluded any special arrangements, and as long as Newfoundland did not adopt the operative clause of the Statute of Westminster it would fall under the umbrella of British external affairs.[21] The replies had been carefully phrased to discourage the hope of any financial help, or as one official understatedly commented, "No prizes were dangled in their eyes."[22]

At the second meeting on 1 May, Addison read the memorandum of reply and explained each answer. Both sides argued their own points of view with more

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[18]PRO, T220/61/105378, Memorandum on visit of Newfoundland delegation from the National Convention to discuss certain questions with the Dominions Secretary.

[19]PANL, GN 10/B Box 2, Answers to Newfoundland Delegation, 1 May 1947.

[20]*Ibid.*

[21]*Ibid.*

[22]PRO, T220/61/105378, Memorandum on visit of Newfoundland delegation ...to discuss certain questions with the Dominions Secretary.

emotion and animation than had been the case during the first session. The British officials stressed the severity of their own economic situation, and the hardship imposed on British people by the strict rationing. By comparison, they argued, Newfoundland was doing extremely well. They seemed shocked by the Newfoundlanders' request that the interest free loan be used to cancel a portion of the public debt. Their reaction elicited an angry response from Malcolm Hollett:

> We have 312,000 people over there getting a pretty raw deal from this country for a good many years, and our job is to look after the interests of our own people, as yours is to look after the interests of your people. As I say, we appreciate your point, but I should think you would also appreciate ours.[23]

Point by point the British officials and the Newfoundlanders worked their way through the issues, the Newfoundlanders being unsuccessful in changing the minds of the British officials.[24]

In reply, the members of the responsible government bloc, Cashin, Hollett, Butt, Fudge, and Crosbie, drafted a memorandum repeating their demands that part of the sterling debt be cancelled, and that Newfoundland not have to pay a portion of the deficit of the Gander Airport. They also reiterated their view that the American bases agreement should be reopened.[25] A second memorandum asked whether, on the basis of the Newfoundland Act (1933), the only two forms of government that could be recommended by the Convention were the retention of Commission and the return of responsible government.[26] They naively hoped this interpretation of the 1933 act would be accepted by the Dominions Secretary. If it had been, the consideration of any other form of government would have ended. The two confederates, Bradley and Keough, not surprisingly refused to sign these memoranda.

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[23]PANL, Walsh Papers P4/36 Box 4 File 5, Meeting of London Delegation, 1 May 1947.

[24]*Ibid.*

[25]PANL, GN 10/B Box 2, Reply to Memo Submitted to the Newfoundland delegation on 1 May 1947, 6 May 1947.

[26]Memo submitted by the Newfoundland delegation, 6 May 1947, as quoted in *Evening Telegram*, 20 May 1947.

The Dominions Office would not be drawn into so narrow an interpretation of the act, and Addison's reply during the third meeting on 7 May was curt. The first memorandum, he maintained, was beyond the terms of reference of the delegation, and indeed of the Convention itself. Furthermore, he was not willing to continue arguing these matters.

> In the written replies I have handed to you to the six questions you have asked, I have been as helpful as I can be. I do not however regard it as the function of this delegation to debate with me questions of the policy of the Newfoundland government in current administrative and other issues, or to seek to negotiate trade agreements between the United Kingdom government and the government of Newfoundland. ... I therefore regret to say that I have nothing to add to the answers I have already made to your questions.[27]

As for the second memorandum, Addison maintained it was up to the Convention to recommend any forms of government the Convention saw fit. Hollett and Cashin could not be put off so easily. They pursued Addison with question after question, trying to force him to be specific on what he intended to do with the Convention's recommendations, and on what percentage vote would constitute a majority in the referendum. Addison was careful to reserve the right to accept the recommendations of a minority in the Convention as to the options on the ballot. He also intimated that if three forms of government were on the ballot, and no form received a majority in the referendum, the lowest form would be dropped, and another referendum held. He was not willing to commit himself on what constituted a majority.[28] Addison closed the series of meetings with "God bless you", to which Crosbie retorted, "I say, God help us." Addison replied with a statement that summed up the rejection of the delegation's request for British aid : "God also helps those who help themselves."[29]

Thus the delegation's efforts to reduce the public debt had failed, as well as

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[27] PANL, Walsh Papers P4/36 Box 4 File 5, Meeting of London Delegation, 7 May 1947.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] *Ibid.*

its argument that Britain owed Newfoundland something for having "sold Newfoundland's sovereignty for 99 years."[30] Few Newfoundlanders still harboured illusions of British aid, but little else had changed. A Treasury official noted his impression of the meetings:

> The visit ran true to expected form : the peddling of wares; [this is a reference to the delegation's efforts to encourage Britain to buy more fish, and iron ore from Bell Island] the attempt to belittle the work of the Commission of Government; to claim as a right U.K. financial responsibility for Newfoundland; to air personal grievances and political opinions. Nothing constructive emerged : neither was any indication forthcoming as to the trend of future events. The visit to Canada will round off their prospecting. It is hoped that they will speed up the work of [the] National Convention which has already fritted [sic] away so much time chasing the shadow of pipe dreams.[31]

On 19 May, Cashin reported to the Convention the results of the London delegation. He was infuriated by Addison's curt and cautious answers, commenting that if Addison had "set out to make enemies of the people of Newfoundland he could not have done a better job of it."[32] Cashin added that he had never met a slicker politician, accused the British of acting in bad faith, and related his version of what had happened. It was an accurate impression in some ways.

> [Walsh and the governor] proceeded us to England for the purpose of sitting in on the meetings, as well as advising the Secretary of State on matters which were to be discussed by the delegation. ...It was not uncommon to see considerable whispering take place when questions of great importance were put to Lord Addison. ... I would go so far as to say that the memorandum in reply to our questions which you have before you, had been prepared before our arrival in England and that the two members of the Commission Government assisted in its

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[30]PRO, T220/61/105378, Memorandum on visit of Newfoundland delegation ...to discuss certain questions with the Dominions Secretary.

[31]*Ibid.*

[32]*Evening Telegram*, 12 May 1947.

preparation[33]

Cashin, always quick to see a conspiracy, was convinced of a sinister motivation behind the Dominions Office response. His voice boomed into the chamber, and through the radio to thousands of listeners, announcing his belief in a British - Canadian conspiracy, and a warning to the people to beware:

> I say to you that there is in operation at the present time a conspiracy to sell, and I use the word sell advisedly, this country to the Dominion of Canada. ... Watch in particular, the attractive bait which will be held out to lure our country into the Canadian mousetrap. Listen to the flowery sales talk which will be offered you, telling Newfoundlanders they are a lost people, that our only hope - our only salvation, lies in following a new Moses into the promised land across the Cabot Strait.[34]

Most members echoed Cashin's disappointment, if not his accusations. The confederates, however, were satisfied with the way the delegation had ended. William Keough thought that Addison had acted in good faith, and brushed aside as inconsequential the mistake in hotel reservations.[35] Smallwood made a special point of underlining the Dominions Offices' message that no help could be expected. He also left the door open for Cashin to be brought into the confederate camp, praising his tireless efforts of behalf of his country, and publicly offering him the position of finance minister in a Smallwood government.[36]

The Convention's attention now turned to the Ottawa delegation. On 23 May a private session was held to discuss the timing of the referendum. It was unanimously agreed that the following autumn was the best time, which was also what the Commission and the Dominions Office had in mind. Bradley told the

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[33]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 19 May 1947.

[34]*Ibid.*

[35]*Evening Telegram*, 12 May 1947.

[36]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 20 May 1947.

meeting he estimated the Ottawa delegation would last about two weeks, and that the Convention would reconvene about 15 July.[37] Since it was thought the delegation would be gone such a short time, the Convention was not adjourned. The delegation left on 19 June, 1947, and started meeting with a Canadian government committee on 25 June.[38]

From the start the delegation acted as if it was negotiating terms of union, something the responsible government group felt was beyond the terms of reference.[39] The confederates in the delegation were hopeful that Canada would make a generous "offer." They could then return triumphantly with terms of union that would form the basis for a confederate campaign. However, the Canadians did not want to negotiate specific terms. If the terms were perceived as niggardly in Newfoundland, confederation would die as it had during the 1890s. On the other hand, if the terms were significantly better than those of the existing provinces, demands to reopen the whole basis of the federal union might be made. The Canadians wanted the delegation to gather information, and return to Newfoundland recommending that if confederation won the referendum, another delegation go to Canada to negotiate terms.[40]

To avoid some of the problems that had plagued the London delegation both parties agreed that no minutes would be kept. The two sides started by exchanging documents.[41] The Newfoundlanders presented a report outlining the services that would fall under federal jurisdiction, the Canadians a memo outlining the Canadian constitution and government services. At further

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[37]PANL, Cashin Papers P4/18, Statement of Peter Cashin dated July 1947.

[38]MacKenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*, p186.

[39]CNS, Canada, "Meetings between delegates from the National Convention and representatives of the Government of Canada."

[40]MacKenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*, p.186-190.

[41]*Ibid.*

meetings on the 2 and 7 July, the delegation asked questions, and then broke into ten joint sub committees to study aspects of the proposed union. The committees were on the public debt, finance, transportation, veterans' benefits, economic development, unemployment insurance, maritime freight rates, Indians and Eskimos, housing, and fisheries. Bradley was a member of none of these, while Smallwood sat on all. The other Newfoundlanders sat on the committees that interested them. Thus Smallwood had an intimate knowledge of most aspects of the proposed union. This was to prove significant when the delegation returned to Newfoundland. In an effort to aid the committees an information committee was established, and technical staff seconded from various Canadian government departments.[42]

The Canadians were eager to finish the meetings, and got the impression that the Newfoundlanders were trying to "spin out time."[43] Dragging out the discussions was perhaps a tactic to pressure the Canadians into offering generous terms. Certainly, the Canadians were painfully aware of the danger of the meetings lasting a long time but not resulting in an "offer."[44] The responsible government faction could then argue that union was not possible, since the delegation was returning home with no terms after lengthy discussions; and the longer the negotiations lasted, the better the terms would have to be to satisfy criticism in Newfoundland. Furthermore, dissension was apparent among the provinces. Maurice Duplessis of Quebec argued that the Quebec - Labrador boundary question would have to be reopened, something unacceptable to most Newfoundlanders, and Premier Angus L. Macdonald of Nova Scotia demanded

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[42]CNS, Canada, "Meetings between delegates from the National Convention and representatives of the Government of Canada."

[43]PRO, DO 35/3447/N2005/20, British High Commissioner to Canada to Commonwealth Relations Office (formally Dominions Office), 10 July 1947.

[44]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Assistant Secretary to Cabinet to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 11 July 1947, p.562-564.

that the provinces have a voice in the Canada - Newfoundland talks.[45] The latter's wariness may have resulted from a perception that Nova Scotia's share of federal aid to the Atlantic region would be diminished if the money had to be shared with a tenth province.[46] Despite Canadian hesitancy the delegation persisted in its determination to return with terms, threatening eventually that if they were not offered, the delegation would report to the Convention that no fair and equitable basis for union could be found.[47] This would probably have ended the possibility of confederation. On 11 July the Canadian officials connected with the talks met with St. Laurent to discuss the negotiations. They related that there existed a "budget gap" between the money necessary to manage the provincial government and the money that would be transferred from Ottawa. Furthermore, the negotiators could not avoid addressing the issue much longer. The cabinet met 18 July to discuss this problem, and approved the negotiation of a complete set of terms.[48] The confederate faction had forced the Canadians' hand, and work began on drafting terms of union.[49]

A Canadian secretary in Gordon Higgins' confidence, Muriel Mosley, reported to the Canadians that the two responsible government advocates on the delegation were not pleased with this development.[50] Higgins and Crummey felt that Smallwood and Bradley were attempting to get a neat set of terms that they could "railroad" through the Convention, eventually bringing about confederation

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[45] *Evening Telegram*, 27 August 1947.

[46] A.H. Huck, "Newfoundland's Entry into Confederation with Canada", (unpublished MA thesis, St. Louis University, 1970).

[47] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*,, Chairman Canadian Delegation to Cabinet, 14 July 1947, p.567-8.

[48] Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*, p.187-8.

[49] *Ibid.* and PRO, DO 35/3450/N2005/33, British High Commissioner in Canada to CRO, 22 July 1947.

[50] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Second Political Division to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, 16 July 1947, p. 570-71.

without proper deliberation by the Newfoundland people. They also thought that Smallwood and Bradley, as Convention delegates, should not negotiate terms, believing that only an elected government had such authority. Higgins also related that someone in the responsible government movement had warned him to "stop bartering and come home or incur considerable wrath."[51] Higgins wanted to stop the negotiations, without appearing to be responsible for them ending, so he, through Mosley, asked the Canadians to adjourn the meetings until the fall. An External Affairs official connected with the talks, Paul Bridle, refused to entertain the idea, and suggested to Higgins that he convince the delegation of his point of view.[52] Since the majority of the delegation were confederates, this was, of course, impossible.

Many of the members of the Convention left behind in St. John's were not content to sit and wait for the delegation to bring back terms. The responsible government faction began to fear a confederate success. If the terms were attractive the danger of the electorate accepting confederation was too great, and realizing that substantial progress toward such terms was being made, they began to plan the sabotage of the Ottawa delegation. They also felt it tactically best to have the referendum that autumn. In turn, this meant that the Convention should communicate its recommendations to the Dominions Office, now renamed the Commonwealth Relations Office, as soon as possible.[53] Early in July, twenty five Convention members met to discuss the situation. They appointed a delegation consisting of Cashin, Hollett, Butt, Harrington, and Vardy, to meet the governor, and set a trap for the Ottawa delegation. They hoped that the governor would confirm that the Commission's policy was to have the referendum in the fall. They could then demand that Bradley return immediately to allow

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[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] PRO, DO 35/3447/N2005/20, Newfoundland to Commonwealth Relations Office, 17 July 1947.

this to be carried out. The Commission, like most people, had expected the Ottawa delegation to last only a few weeks. It had no intention of forcing the delegation to return before finishing the negotiations, but it had not actually formally changed its policy to have the referendum in the fall. Not realizing what was happening, the governor confirmed that this was the Commission's policy, and that Bradley had been informed that the Convention's recommendations would have to be made by 15 August in order to meet this objective.[54] This information in hand, all that remained was for the responsible government faction to spring their trap. On 16 July, one day after the date on which Bradley had suggested the Convention would reconvene, they sent Bradley a telegram outlining what the governor had told them, and continuing,

> it is evident that your plans indicated to us at a private meeting before your departure to Ottawa are not maturing and consequently it seems to many of us, in view of your statement made prior to your departure, that efforts are being made to deprive the country of any referendum this fall. In view of these circumstances, and on behalf of the great majority of the Convention, we request you authorize the Secretary to reconvene the Convention immediately.[55]

They hoped that this would force Bradley either to end the Ottawa negotiations, or to authorize its reconvening without the presence of the Ottawa delegation. If he did the former, confederation would be more difficult to sell to the people without specific terms. If the latter, the Convention's business might be brought quickly to a close, and the ballot recommendations, excluding confederation, would be made while a large part of the confederate faction was still in Ottawa. Bradley chose neither of these options.

His first act was to check what the governor had actually said. Governor Macdonald, realizing his error, sent Bradley a telegram claiming he had been

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[54]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Committee of Convention to Bradley, 16 July 1947, enclosure in Acting Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to External Affairs, 17 July 1947, p.571-2.

[55]*Ibid.*

misrepresented, and told Bradley he saw no reason for the delegation to return.[56] Macdonald had, in fact, earlier received permission from the Commonwealth Relations Office for a delay in the referendum timetable.[57] On 18 July Bradley wired his reply. He insisted that the delegation was doing what the Convention had empowered it to do, nothing more, nothing less. The allegations made regarding the Commission's policy on the timing of the referendum were incorrect, and he repudiated the insinuation that he was attempting to prevent the referendum from happening that year.[58]

The responsible government faction was infuriated by the governor's action, and Bradley's response. They had the *Telegram* print the correspondence between themselves and Bradley, along with an explanation of their disagreement with him:

> This reply ... exhibits a rather dictatorial attitude on the part of Mr. Bradley, wholly out of proportion to the powers granted to him by the Convention. He seems to ignore the fact that as a member of a subordinate committee he is subject to the wishes of a majority of its members.[59]

They continued by charging that the governor's telegram to Bradley confirmed that Commission policy was "to have [the] referendum this autumn provided [the] recommendations of National Convention have been received by a date which will allow sufficient time for such preparations".[60]

On 24 July Bradley and St. Laurent announced that a basis for union could

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[56]PRO, DO 35/3447/N2005/20, British High Commissioner in Canada to CRO, 18 July 1947.

[57]*Ibid.*, CRO to British High Commissioner in Newfoundland, 18 July 1947.

[58]PANL, GN 10/B Box 4, Bradley to Warren, 18 July 1947.

[59]*Evening Telegram*, 21 July 1947.

[60]*Ibid.*

be worked out, and optimistically predicted the talks would soon end.[61] They hoped this announcment would silence those pressing for the return of the delegation. Smallwood and the rest of the confederate faction were in no hurry, however, and, to the frustration of the Canadian negotiators, continued to suggest terms more generous than those on which agreement had already been reached. The Newfoundlanders did this despite the fact that the Canadians thought that they already had gone too far in what they had offered. The delegation's persistence led the Canadian negotiators to think that the delegation, except for Bradley and Ashbourne, were "pretty irresponsible."[62] Clutterbuck, formerly the expert on Newfoundland affairs in the Dominions Office and now British High Commissioner to Canada, reported that the delegation had been "pressing for a basis which would in effect have given [the] new provincial government complete freedom to indulge in all kinds of extravagant expenditure while leaving [the] federal government to cover [the] provincial deficit."[63] On a more positive note, he was also able to report that agreement had been made on a financing formula, and all that remained was the drafting and presentation of the terms.[64] Smallwood and R.A. Mackay began drafting these final terms, a task that should have been finished by the end of the second week in September.

However, an event unconnected with the negotiations prevented the conclusion of the delegation's visit. This was the death of the Canadian Minister of Fisheries, Frank Bridges. He was the only representative of New Brunswick in the cabinet, and the other members were unwilling to approve terms without at least one representative of that province. More important, they did not want the

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[61] *Ibid.*, 24 July 1947.

[62] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Head Second Political Division External Affairs to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, 9 August 1947, p.613-14.

[63] PRO, DO 35/3450/N2005/33, British High Commissioner in Canada to CRO, 13 August 1947.

[64] *Ibid.*

terms of Newfoundland's entry into the union to become the issue in the byelection. Yet a great deal of pressure existed for the delegation to return to Newfoundland, and the confederates did not want to arrive empty handed.[65] With all of the work finished, and pressure from Newfoundland, the delegation was split on the question of when to return home.[66]

The responsible government faction chose this moment to strike once more at Bradley. Another telegram demanding the return of the delegation was dispatched, this one signed by twenty one members of the Convention.[67] They argued that Bradley's "openly negotiating with the Canadian government [was] wholly unauthorized and beyond terms of reference."[68] They continued, "We now advise you that we wholly dissociate ourselves from all negotiations conducted by you or [the] delegation in excess [of] strict legal limitation."[69] Bradley sent an angry reply on 12 September. He insisted the delegation was working within its terms of reference, and resented the attempt to dictate his duty. The members that had signed the telegram were playing party politics, according to Bradley, and their attempts to wreck the delegation's work "may turn out to be nothing short of national treachery."[70]

Despite the rebuke, the pressure on Bradley to return was too great for him to postpone leaving for long. He decided to return after the plenary session of the

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[65]PRO, DO 35/3450/N2005/33, British High Commissioner to Canada to CRO, 6 September 1947.

[66]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Assistant Secretary to Cabinet to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 8 September 1947, p.626-28.

[67]Those signing the telegram were : Jackman, Fudge, Northcott, Goodridge, Cashin, Kennedy, Hannon, Hollett, Bailey, McCormack, Fogwell, Miller, Crosbie, Cranford, Jones, Hickman, Penney, Fowler, Dawe, Harrington, and Butt.

[68]*Evening Telegram*, 9 September 1947.

[69]*Ibid.*

[70]PANL, GN 10/C Box 4, Bradley to Warren, 12 September 1947.

talks on 29 September. Unfortunately from the confederates' point of view, this meant returning to Newfoundland without the terms. These would be sent to Newfoundland after the byelection in New Brunswick on 20 October. The confederates would have to play for time until the terms arrived.[71] To aid the confederates in this the Canadians prepared a statement outlining the history of the negotiations, and a series of factual appendixes.[72]

The Responsible Government League had not been idle while the delegation was in Ottawa. They had continued to organize and prepare for the referendum, and began considering an alliance with the responsible government faction in the Convention. An odd ambivalence developed between the two groups, and they never did sort out their relationship. On 8 April the League had decided to approach the Convention faction to see if they were interested in becoming members.[73] Evidently this was not immediately acted upon, for at a further meeting on 30 May a proposal for the chair and two members of the League to meet the members of the Convention from St. John's was approved. After they had been invited to join, the outport members would be approached. It was hoped they would also supply names of people in rural Newfoundland who could be asked to serve on the executive.[74] The executive of the League was infinitely expandable to provide the appearance of a broadly based political movement, and to provide key people in the outports who could recruit new members. The League only contacted those members of the Convention who were thought to favour responsible government, and all of these people professed their strong support for the League. However, some of them felt that by associating their

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[71]PRO, DO 35/3450/N2005/33, British High Commissioner to Canada to CRO, 15 September 1947.

[72]Bridle (ed), *Documents*, Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs to Consul General in New York, 25 September 1947, p.644-45.

[73]CNS, RGL Papers, File "Executive Committee Minutes," Minutes of Executive Meeting, 8 April 1947.

[74]*Ibid.*, 30 May 1947.

names with the organization, the league might be accused of trying to undermine the work of the Convention. With this in mind, the League decided that for the moment the members of the Convention would not be invited to join.[75]

This did not mean that the Convention members had to keep their distance from the League in private, and an ambivalent relationship continued to exist. Two members of the Convention, Harrington and Hollett, who had specific skills the League needed, were brought in. On 13 June, Harrington, who had been a journalist and radio broadcaster for some years, agreed to help prepare radio programs for the League.[76] By 11 August, with the Ottawa delegation busily negotiating terms, the League was not as concerned about publicly keeping its distance from the Convention as it had been. When A.B. Perlin resigned as chair of the publicity committee so that someone with more time to devote to it could take over, F.M. O'Leary put Malcolm Hollett's name forward. He was quickly approved by the executive and given responsibility for writing pamphlets and radio programs.[77] At a later meeting these steps were confirmed, as was a plan to utilize outport members of the Convention as field workers for the League when the Convention ended.[78] The League thought that close liaison with Convention members should be maintained, with the outport members being asked to join as a bloc. O'Leary would contact Cashin himself, and try to impress upon him the advisability of all advocates of responsible government being united.[79] Cashin later agreed to co-operate.[80] Yet many in the League remained wary of Cashin, and the alliance with him was difficult to maintain.

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[75] *Ibid.*, 6 June 1947.

[76] *Ibid.*, 13 June 1947.

[77] *Ibid.*, 11 August 1947.

[78] *Ibid.*, 18 August 1947.

[79] *Ibid.*, 2 September 1947.

[80] *Ibid.*, 8 September 1947.

The funding secured, and organization complete, the League commenced its preparations for a propaganda campaign. Hollett was asked to draft a plan for the upcoming campaign, and on 8 of September he circulated "Some Thoughts on a Plan of Action Relative to a Campaign for Responsible Government."[81] The plan had two aspects : a tactical appraisal, and a political platform. Hollett thought that the League should ensure that the responsible government supporters in the Convention worked towards the return of responsible government before any other form of government was considered. The League would, under his plan, ensure that members of the Convention consistently voted toward this end, and against confederation being on the ballot. The League would begin the campaign at once, using both radio and printed propaganda. Hollett also envisioned committees spread across the island and Labrador to inform the people of the various taxes that would have to be paid under confederation. He recommended that the League and the responsible government faction in the Convention immediately set up a joint committee to discuss the details of responsible government, such as the number of districts, candidates' qualifications, and a civil service commission. The civil service would be revised, to include new departments of labour and fisheries reconstruction, for example. After the referendum, the League would transform itself into a political party, perhaps called the National party or Newfoundland party.[82] At the next executive meeting, 15 September, the League appointed four committees to study Hollett's plan : policy, information, radio, and press.[83] Soon after they began selling the responsible government cause with regular radio broadcasts, and pamphlet distribution.

As the Convention entered the delegation phase confederation seemed

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[81] *Ibid.*

[82] CNS, RGL Papers, File "Policy, Aims, Tactics", "Some Thoughts on a Plan of Action Relative to a Campaign for Responsible Government."

[83] *Ibid.*, Executive Minutes, File "Executive Committee Minutes," 15 September 1947.

implausible to most people, and the responsible government forces were confident that Newfoundland would regain its former status. But the Dominions Office had dashed their hopes of British aid, giving them a substantial setback. However, thanks largely to a group outside the Convention, the Responsible Government League, the responsible government advocates had been organized into an effective, well financed, machine. As the summer ended this machine moved into gear, and started a responsible government campaign. That the League should only be starting its propaganda campaign in the fall is remarkable. They might have had a great deal of success during the summer of 1947 while the principal confederates were in Ottawa. But they had let the opportunity to get a head start on the confederates in the propaganda war slip by, and had not yet forged an effective partnership with the responsible government advocates in the Convention. Though the confederates were not nearly as well organized, they had also made progress. The Ottawa delegation had managed to get the Canadians to offer generous terms of union. Ultimately, this would make the task of convincing the Newfoundland people that confederation was the best form of government much easier.

# Chapter 5

## The Committee Reports

The Convention's mandate specified that it would "consider and discuss ... the changes that have taken place in the financial and economic situation of the island since 1934."[1] The Dominions Office had hoped that by demanding an examination of the financial and economic state of the island the Convention members would recognize the fragility of the Newfoundland economy, and so recommend confederation. The Chadwick-Jones report had been provided to encourage the Convention to reach this conclusion. Yet the Convention quickly dismissed the report and set about its own investigations. They decided to divide into ten committees, each responsible for an aspect of Newfoundland's economy and society : forestry, education, agriculture, fisheries, public health and welfare, mining, tourism, local industries, transportation and communication, and finance.[2] Chairman Fox and an *ad hoc* committee chose ten members for each committee, with each member sitting on three committees. Methods and sophistication varied, but the approach was the same. Meetings were held in the mornings to hear witnesses, discuss approach, and divide the tasks among the committee members. The Convention did not provide a specific mandate or terms of reference to the committees, resulting in considerable variety among the reports. Once the reports were completed they were debated and adopted by the Convention. Finally, the finance committee drew upon other reports to prepare a general report on the financial and economic state and prospects of the country.

Yet soon after starting its investigation the Convention's had its proceedings interrupted by Smallwood's motion to send a delegation to Canada. In the angry aftermath the Convention divided into two camps, and the investigative function

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[1]PANL, National Convention Act, No. 16, 1946, Clause 3.

[2]Copies of the reports of these committees can be found in the Center for Newfoundland Studies, MUN.

became subsumed in the political debate. People like Job and Cashin used the reports as vehicles to argue their political points of view. The most important report, that of the finance committee, became little more than a propaganda statement by the responsible government advocates.

The committee reports may be divided into three groups, each of different importance, and degree of thoroughness. First, are those that dealt with minor aspects of Newfoundland's economy and society, such as education, tourism, and health and welfare. Most of these reports were concise and limited in scope, and as such they can be dealt with as a group. The second group were those that dealt with the principal sectors of the economy, the fishery and forestry industries. The third group consisted of the financial and economic reports of the financial committee.

In essence, each of the reports in the first group provided a statistical portrait of its field, and predicted the revenue and expenditure which a future government could expect in each sector. The education report, for example, restricted itself to enumerating the number of schools, and teachers, and the costs of these services. It concluded that the Department of Education was doing a good job, and that plans for improvements and extensions to service should be continued.[3] The Public Health and Welfare Report described the facilities and services available, reported that services were excellent, and recommended that they should be continued at present levels, at a cost of about $ 6 million per annum. But this report also made an observation about a change in the public's perception of the role of the state that had important implications for the future government of Newfoundland:

> The modern concept of the state is that of the "social welfare state" and we agree upon the practical impossibility of Newfoundland evading acceptance of that modern concept. People expect their government [in] these times to provide social services, and we agree that this

[3] Education Committee Report.

responsibility must be assumed by any modern government.[4] This was the reality of post-war Newfoundland, and the implication was that the form of government chosen would have to be able to fulfill these responsibilities. Yet the report did not attempt to predict the scale of additional expenditures that this would necessitate. The finance report failed to include the cost of these new services in its estimate of future government expenditures.

The Agricultural Report was similar. It relied on census statistics to estimate the annual value of agriculture at about $12 million. The report estimated that after the initial expenditure of $1 million on agricultural reconstruction, an annual government expenditure of less than $ 250,000 would be needed.[5] Similarly, the Mining Committee provided a history and evaluation of each mine, and discussed possible future opportunities for exploitation.[6]

The Tourism Report was optimistic about the potential for expansion in this industry. Hunting, fishing, sightseeing, and shopping were thought to be Newfoundland's strongest selling points. The committee members still thought that Newfoundland was in a position to benefit from trans-atlantic passenger traffic, a naive idea that had been used as an argument in favour of a railroad in the late nineteenth century. The report speculated that passengers from aircraft refueling at the Gander Airport could be encouraged to spend time and money enjoying the island's natural resources, and shopping. To encourage tourism the report suggested building a trans-island road, moving the ferry terminus from Port Aux Basques to Corner Brook, and placing larger ships, including car ferries, on the Cabot Strait run.[7]

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[4]Public Health and Welfare Report.

[5]Agricultural Report.

[6]Mining Committee Report.

[7]Tourism Report.

The Transportation and Communication Report dealt with the costs and problems endemic to the railway, roads, posts and telegraphs, and the Gander Airport. It also examined broadcasting.[8] A committee that had a great deal of difficulty fulfilling its task was the Local Industries Committee. Since fishing, forestry, and mining were the responsibilities of other committees, it restricted itself to secondary manufacturing. Though this sector was small, the committee felt that it was very important since it provided continuous as opposed to seasonal employment. Thus, everything possible should be done to encourage this sector.[9]

The second group of reports, those on the principal industries, were much more thorough, and deserve a more detailed examination. The forestry committee compiled its report under the direction of Pierce Fudge, president of the Newfoundland Labourers Union and a member of the Woods Labour Board. Despite this arrangement the committee did not investigate wages, working conditions, or related topics. It discussed the history, and described the current state of the forest industry. With annual earnings of $ 15 million, this sector was second in importance only to the fishery.[10] In fact, the total value of forestry exports outstripped that of the fishery in some years, though forestry never employed as many people. The committee made two recommendations to the Commission to protect the industry. First, that there be a reforestation programme, and second that there be strict fire regulations. The committee also had two criticisms. It condemned the government for leasing timber rights to companies and individuals within the three mile coastal zone that had traditionally been reserved for the use of fishermen; and it also protested the "Gander deal" of 1938, whereby timber rights on the Gander River watershed had been granted to supply an existing paper mill at Corner Brook rather than a

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[8]Transportation and Communication Report.

[9]Local Industries Report.

[10]Forestry Committee Report, pp.5-6.

new mill on the Gander River.[11] A third paper mill had been, and continued to be, a goal of Newfoundland politicians. The forestry report concluded that the industry was flourishing, and had good prospects for growth. "On a most conservative basis," the committee reported, "we visualize that within a period of three years, at least 15,000 people will find employment in our various forest industries yearly."[12]

Apart from the finance committee report, the most emphasis was placed on the report of the fisheries committee. The fishery was the basis of rural society, but even more than that, the perception of Newfoundland as a fishery persisted. Consequently, this report was broader in scope and depth than the other reports. The committee started under the chairmanship of Kenneth Brown, the president of the Fishermen's Protective Union, but after he became ill at the end of October 1946, R.B Job took over. Job had been a fish exporter most of his life, and represented the traditional economic elite. His faith that the fisheries would continue to be the mainstay of the Newfoundland economy formed the basis of his views, and the report. The committee divided into sub committees of two people each to prepare reports on the various fisheries : fresh frozen, salt codfish, herring, sealing, whaling, subsidiary fisheries (salmon, squid, lobster), by-products, and canning. An official of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, George Lewis, was seconded to help, and a total of 26 witnesses were interviewed. When the subcommittee reports were finished, they were incorporated into the main report.

Job and the committee saw the fishery as not only the largest employer and a source of exports, but also the only sector capable of absorbing the unemployed workforce.

> We believe we can reasonably expect that more and more men will return to the fishery as chances of profitable employment become more restricted elsewhere. We realize that in normal times we must look to

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[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid.*

the fisheries as our main source of employment.[13]

Thus the fishery was seen as a social safety net for those who could not find employment elsewhere. No conception existed that the fishery had a limit to the number of people it could absorb.

In its commentary on a table showing saltfish exports during the twentieth century, the report remarked that "they tell in fish the story of two world wars and two depressions."[14] Thus it pointed out the danger of dependence on the export of a single staple into an unstable world market, especially a market that they correctly predicted would "witness a progressive decline."[15] The report agreed with the Newfoundland Fisheries Board's opinion that, given modern refrigeration, world saltfish production outstripped world consumption. Therefore fish would have to reallocated from the saltfish sector into the frozen industry. It would then be marketed in the United States which was "regarded as the safety valve for the salt codfish industry."[16] The United States was the only market perceived as capable of absorbing this new production. The report noted two ways in which access to this market might be achieved : first, through multinational trade agreements, and second through the cultivation of a special relationship with the Americans. The report favoured the second of these, on the grounds that Newfoundland's strategic value, and the value to the Americans of their military bases on the island, gave Newfoundland a strong bargaining position.

This plan was an naive overestimation of Newfoundland's importance. The committee persisted in this belief despite repeated comments that it was

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[13] Fisheries Committee Report, p.7.

[14] *Ibid.*, p.16.

[15] *Ibid.*, p.17.

[16] *Ibid.*, p.19A.

unrealistic.[17] As subsequently pointed out by David Alexander, the United States already possessed 99 year leases on its bases, and was pursuing multilateral, not bilateral, trade agreements, therefore it was unlikely to be sympathetic to Newfoundland's suggestion.[18] Even had neither of these factors existed, he continued, Newfoundland's competitors had at least an equivalent bargaining strength :

> In the final analysis, therefore, the prospects for an expanded U.S. market could not be engineered into something special and reserved for Newfoundland : she would have to fight for a place in that market with exactly the same countries with whom she already competed in other world fish markets and on terms which the U.S. was prepared to extend to all of them.[19]

The report of the fisheries committee also suggested several avenues which might be pursued to improve production. It emphasized the need for modernization, mechanization, and research to improve the quality of the product. Such developments as the use of artificial fish dryers, it was hoped, could make a substantial difference. The report also proposed a novel idea to raise the capital necessary for these changes. Low priced common stock would be sold to the fishermen, thus allowing them to "participate more in the earnings of the fishery", though in light of "the great hesitation of Newfoundlanders to invest to any great extent in local enterprises," it suggested that it might be better to issue low interest government bonds.[20] The report recognized that prior to the establishment of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board and the Newfoundland Associated Fish Exporters Limited competition among exporters had hurt the

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[17] See above pp.62-63 and 73.

[18] David Alexander, *The Decay of Trade* (St. John's, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977) p.11-12.

[19] *Ibid.*, p.12.

[20] Fishery Committee Report, p.52.

industry.[21] Yet the more recent group marketing schemes had also resulted in low prices. The key to the problem, in the fisheries committee's view, was co-operation and co-ordination among all exporters.[22]

All of the committee reports were drawn upon by the finance committee for its report on the solvency of the Newfoundland state. It was the culmination of the investigative efforts of the Convention. Much of the responsibility for this report was borne by Cashin, who as a consequence of his experience as finance minister between 1928-1932 was obsessed with the public debt, and its potential dangers. This was reflected in the report, which discussed at great length the financial history of the government in an attempt to vindicate its role in Newfoundland's near collapse in 1933. The report also attempted to demonstrate that Newfoundland could survive independently, a reflection of Cashin's position as the most outspoken responsible government advocate in the Convention. To accomplish these two things Cashin drew selectively from the other committee reports, to write what amounted to political propaganda. The majority of the finance committee were also responsible government supporters, Crosbie, Hickman, Penney, Goodridge, Crummey, and Cranford, and not surprisingly they agreed with Cashin's views. Job was also a member, as were the two confederates, Keough and Ballam. Job and Keough disagreed with the report's conclusions, and resigned from the committee just as the report was being finished.[23] The finance committee divided its report into two sections, financial and economic. The finance report provided an economic history, focusing on the state of government finances. The economic report consisted of an evaluation of the present state of the economy, with some predictions for the future.

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[21] *Ibid.*, p.10.

[22] *Ibid.*, p.11.

[23] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, High Commissioner in Newfoundland to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 28 October 1947, p.681.

The finance report maintained that in order to understand the economic changes since 1934, it was necessary to examine the economy from a much earlier date.[24] The year 1909 was chosen as a starting point, since both the majority of the witnesses to the Amulree commission, and the commission's report, had identified the fall of Robert Bond's government in that year as the start of Newfoundland's economic decline.[25] The report suggested that during the five year period before World War One the budget was in surplus. Then followed the accumulation of a large deficit during the war to finance Newfoundland's involvement. In the post-war period large amounts of capital were needed to refurbish the railway, and falling fish prices resulted in a depression. Thus Newfoundland's debt burden became too much for the its government, and commission government had to take over. The report suggested that the new government did no better managing the island, arguing that if the Commission had been obliged to pay the full amount of the debt servicing, as had been the case under responsible government, its annual deficit would have been as large as that of its predecessors.[26] In an amazing feat of putting the best light on a bad situation, the report claimed that:

> After a close review of the administration of our affairs from the year 1920-21 to the year 1933, we find that but for the ravages of a post war depression during the early 1920's, and for the financial collapse of the world generally in 1929, all of which was beyond the power or control of any Newfoundland government, ordinarily our affairs were progressing favourably.[27]

The report maintained that even during the worst economic times Newfoundland had survived on its own, and that the grants in aid from Britain to the Commission had only been sufficient to pay the interest on the public debt.

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[24]Finance Report, p.1.

[25]Great Britain, *Royal Commission on Newfoundland, 1933,* (Amulree Commission) cmd. 4480, and Peter Fenwick, "Witnesses to the Lord : An Analysis of the Testimony Presented to the Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933, Lord Amulree, Chairman," Unpublished paper in CNS, 1984.

[26]Financial Report, p.42-43.

[27]*Ibid.*

The report also reviewed the expenditures of the Commission, and found them extravagant. It condemned the Commission for not taking steps to "curtail or control expenditures."[28] The committee agreed with the increase in the budget of the Education Department and the cost of living increases given to civil servants, but thought the other increases in expenditure could not be justified. It even contradicted the Public Health and Welfare Committee's report by suggesting that the department's additional spending was questionable. The finance report was attempting to present a balanced prospective budget, and this involved maintaining a more modest expenditure than that of the Commission.

> It is the considered opinion of the finance committee of this National Convention that at no time during the period 1940-41 should the total expenditure of the country have exceeded the sum of 21 million dollars annually.[29]

Furthermore, the commission should not have made interest free loans to Britain, while still paying interest on the public debt, and while the government owned railway was borrowing money to replace rolling stock.

World War Two had created an economic recovery, and the report admitted that the prosperity was the result of wartime conditions. But it was optimistic about that prosperity lasting into the post war period.

> It might be termed artificial prosperity, but nevertheless we feel that the contacts made with the outside world, as well as definite recognition of Newfoundland's strategic position, will contribute in no small measure in helping the country make further progress in the world when conditions once again become normal.[30]

The committee pointed out that Newfoundland's per capita public debt was $ 230, while Canada's was $ 1,387. Ignoring the discrepancy in per capita income, the committee thought that "these figures prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that

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[28] *Ibid.*, p.100.

[29] *Ibid.*, p.97-98.

[30] *Ibid.*, p.95.

the financial position of Newfoundland today is most encouraging."[31] The report finished on a high note.

> Concluding our findings with respect to this section of our report, we are glad to be able to state: That despite consistent abnormal expenditure during the past five years, Newfoundland stands in the strongest financial position in her history.[32]

The economic report examined revenue and expenditure in a startling exercise of gymnastic accounting. The revenue for the 50 year period from 1897 to 1947 was estimated to have been about $ 496 million, and expenditure to be about $ 500 million. But the committee suggested that the estimated $ 20 million spent on capital account should not be included, since it was not a normal expenditure; thus over this period, a surplus on current account of $ 15 million existed. Looking at the figures a different way, the national debt was $ 70 million. If one subtracted the surplus of $ 35 million accumulated by the Commission, then the net indebtedness was $ 35 million. Yet the Ottawa delegation had estimated Newfoundland's assets (including the deficit running Newfoundland railroad) at $ 110 million. Thus, the economic report concluded, Newfoundland's surplus was $ 75 million, or about $ 1.5 million per year. So, the committee felt, Newfoundland might reasonably expect average annual surpluses of $ 1.5 million.[33]

The report then took a different tack, estimating government revenue for 1947 at $ 37 million, and predicting that this would fall off only slightly. The estimates of future revenue by the other committees added up to $ 30 million dollars. Since annual expenditures, in the report's estimation, would be about $ 25 million, the committee triumphantly predicted an annual surplus of $ 5 million. The concluding remarks summed up the committee's optimism:

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[31] *Ibid.*, p.109.

[32] *Ibid.*, p.111.

[33] Economic Report.

> ...it is to be regretted that the lists of our assets does not contain in greater quantity - one which we cannot place in our columns of our economic report - we mean faith in ourselves - the faith and confidence which every man owes to himself and his country.[34]

When the Dominions Office had written the terms of reference of the Convention it had hoped that the study of Newfoundland's economic position would lead the Convention to realize that the island could not survive independently, and so recommend union with Canada. But the impartial study had been subsumed by the political debate, and the financial and economic reports were written to prove an independent Newfoundland could survive. Just as the confederates had the information gathered in Ottawa to use in arguing the benefits of confederation, the responsible government advocates had the finance and economic reports to demonstrate self sufficiency.

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[34] *Ibid.*, p.44.

# Chapter 6

## The Confederation Debate

On 11 October 1947 the Convention reconvened amidst considerable acrimony. Smallwood tabled the report of the Ottawa delegation, including the two "black books" containing background information on Canada, and the proposed union with Newfoundland. Before this could be discussed, however, Cashin rose to give notice that he wanted the finance report considered.[1] He may have hoped that this would prevent confederation from being discussed until the terms were made known.[2] Or, since the finance report claimed that Newfoundland was self-supporting, he may have hoped that once the Convention had adopted the report it would amount to having admitted that Newfoundland was self sufficient. The responsible government advocates could then argue that responsible government should be returned, and that the discussion of confederation should be dispensed with. Since it was to the confederates' advantage to delay the confederation debate until the terms arrived, they went along with Cashin's plan.

But there was considerable tension between the two factions. Bradley had learned that the responsible government advocates, angry at the way he had handled the Ottawa delegation, were planning a *coup* to replace him. Had he insisted on remaining chairman he could not have been forced out by the responsible government bloc; but they could have made his chairmanship totally ineffective by using their majority to overrule him. He had already achieved a great deal toward confederation by his handling of the two delegations, and the stage seemed to be over when having a confederate as chairman was a substantial advantage. Now that the Convention was close to starting the debate on the

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[1]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 11 October 1947.

[2]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 11 October 1947, p.671-672.

ballot options, there were advantages to Bradley resuming his seat and not being encumbered by the position of the chair. Bradley was, despite Smallwood, the confederate with the greatest national reputation and experience in the Convention. Undoubtedly these factors were in Bradley's mind when he decided to step down as chairman. When Butt started to give notice "that tomorrow I will move the following resolution : Whereas it has been brought to the attention of members of this Convention that its presiding officer, both in his official capacity..."[3] Bradley interrupted to say,

> Just a moment; I have something to say. ... As chairman I cannot defend myself, my integrity was questioned ... I have to inform this Convention that I have not the slightest intention of tolerating further attack in a position where I cannot defend myself. ... Gentlemen, this Convention is without a chairman.[4]

With that he rose and walked out of the chamber. Disorder and confusion reigned in the chamber and gallery as people questioned what was to be done.[5] Some members endeavoured to be heard over the din with a proposal to have the secretary, Gordon Warren, assume the chair temporarily, and then to pass a motion asking the Commission to appoint a new chairman. Smallwood attempted to shout them down, erroneously insisting that only the chairman could ask the secretary to assume the chair. Order was finally restored when Warren assumed the chair on his own initiative, and adjourned the sitting.[6]

The Commission quickly found a replacement for Bradley, swearing in John Bernard McEvoy, a prominent St. John's lawyer, on 13 October.[7] McEvoy was a logical choice from the Commission's perspective. He was well respected, and something of an authority on constitutional matters. Perhaps most importantly,

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[3]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 11 October 1947.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]*Evening Telegram*, 11 October 1947.

[6]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 10 October 1947.

[7]*Evening Telegram*, 11 October 1947.

he was a confederate who had kept his sympathies private. R.A. MacKay of the Canadian Department of External Affairs was a friend of McEvoy, and had years earlier identified him as a possible leader of a confederation movement.[8] Of course, in the emotion-charged Newfoundland of the fall of 1947, no person could have been found that did not hold an opinion on the confederation issue. When McEvoy assumed the chair on 15 October, he confidently took charge and reminded the members of his role as chairman.[9] Ironically, he ruled in a more partisan manner than Bradley could have, given the tensions in the Convention.

With McEvoy in the chair, the Convention started debating the finance report. Cashin, the principal author, began the deliberations with a summary of the report, demonstrating, in his opinion, that Newfoundland was self supporting from a bookkeeping point of view.[10] The confederates disagreed, arguing that self-sufficiency depended on the capacity for economic growth, not budget balancing. In other words, the economy had to be able to ensure people an adequate standard of living for the colony to be truly self sufficient.[11] Later the economic report, which came to similar conclusions about Newfoundland's economic viability, received a similar response. The report projected probable export values, government revenue, and expenditure for the next three years. Smallwood responded to the "budget" by recounting the poor record of Newfoundland's finance ministers in predicting these values for a single year, let alone three, and did not miss the opportunity to point out that Cashin himself had been one of these finance ministers. He then concluded with a point by point critique of the estimates.[12]

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[8]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, R.A. MacKay to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 29 June 1945, p. 152-54.

[9]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 15 October 1947.

[10]*Ibid.*, 16 October 1947.

[11]*Ibid.*, 17 October 1947.

[12]*Ibid.*, 4 November 1947.

While the finance report was being debated, the Canadians prepared to send the proposed terms of union. Soon after the byelection in New Brunswick MacKenzie King sent the proposed terms, known as "the grey book." It set out the areas of federal and provincial jurisdiction and responsibility. Ottawa would compensate the provincial government, and assume a portion of the public debt. King warned that these were the most attractive terms Canada was willing to offer.

> I feel I must emphasize that as far as the financial aspects of the proposed arrangements for union are concerned, the government of Canada believes that the arrangements go as far as the government can go under the circumstances. The government could not readily contemplate any change in these arrangements which would impose larger financial burdens on Canada. On the other hand, with respect to those matters which are primarily of provincial concern, such as education, the government of Canada would not wish to set down any rigid conditions, and would be prepared to give reasonable consideration to suggestions for modification or addition.[13]

The grey book arrived on 6 November, and Bradley gave notice he would move its reception the following day.[14]

On 7 November the steering committee met to discuss how the Convention would deal with the proposed terms of union. The responsible government bloc wanted a debate in a sitting of the Convention, limiting each speaker to one hour. The confederates wanted the terms discussed in a committee of the whole, allowing each member to speak as long and as often as he might like, thus providing a perfect opportunity to publicize the Canadian offer. In the midst of a heated discussion Cashin lost his temper, went around the table, and threw himself on top of the diminutive Smallwood. The other members of the

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[13]CNS, McEvoy "Confederation Papers and Correspondence," King to Governor of Newfoundland, 29 October 1947.

[14]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 6 November 1947.

committee had to take Cashin outside to calm him.[15] That afternoon Cashin sent McEvoy a letter of apology and resignation from the steering committee.[16] Smallwood, perhaps not wanting to be accused of having provoked the attack as a way of removing Cashin from the committee, moved that Cashin's resignation not be accepted. Cashin retained his seat on the committee, but had lost the battle to restrict the debate to the full Convention. McEvoy had decided to insist that the terms be debated in a committee of the whole. His rationale was that this procedure would permit a full and detailed exposition of the terms, but the effect was to give the confederates the platform they wanted.[17]

When the debate on the economic report resumed the two factions in the Convention jockeyed for position. Bradley moved the reception and consideration of the terms. Higgins, wanting to ensure the completion of the debate on the economic report, proposed an amendment that would have had the Convention receive the Canadian communication right away, but reserve any debate on this until later. After a great deal of procedural wrangling the amendment passed, delaying debate of the terms until the adoption of the committee reports. Higgins also gave notice of motion "that the wishes of the people of Newfoundland as to whether it is their desire that responsible government be returned be ascertained as soon as possible."[18] The responsible government bloc had delayed the debate on the terms of union with Canada, and now hoped to recommend two options on the ballot before being forced to debate the confederation terms. Though they

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[15]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 10 November 1947, p.734-35.

[16]PANL, GN 10/C Box 6, Cashin to McEvoy, 7 November 1947.

[17]Bridle (ed), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 10 November 1947, p.734-35.

[18]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 7 November 1947.

did not know it, McEvoy had decided to overrule this motion if it passed.[19] At the following session the confederates tried to counter the responsible government faction's ploy. Smallwood gave notice of motion that the Convention resolve into a committee of the whole to discuss the proposals from Canada. He followed this with a second motion, that the Convention recommend three choices for the referendum, commission government, responsible government as it existed in 1934, and confederation with Canada. To reassure the Convention that the confederates were not trying to stifle the debate on the economic report, Smallwood promised to delay these motions on a day-to-day basis until the report was adopted. The manoeuvering was not over. Higgins followed with notice of a request to the Commission to amend the Convention act to allow members absent because of illness to vote by proxy.[20] This was a transparent ploy to allow the anti-confederate Kenneth Brown, who had not fully recovered from a stroke suffered in October 1947, to vote. The Commission denied this request, though it was willing to have an absent member's preference recorded. It also reminded the Convention that:

> there is no provision that the recommendations of any particular proportion of the representatives should form the recommendation of the Convention. ...members of the Convention who hold a minority view on any question are entitled themselves ... to have their recommendations go forward from the Convention.[21]

The Commission was well aware of the responsible government majority in the Convention, and was once more affirming the Commonwealth Relations Office's power to determine the options on the ballot. On the 14 November, in an effort to quicken the deliberations, the Convention passed a motion providing for night sessions.[22]

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[19]Bridle (ed), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 10 November 1947, p.734-35.

[20]PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 10 November 1947.

[21]*Ibid.*, 17 November 1947.

[22]*Ibid.*, 14 November 1947.

On 20 November the debate moved to its next phase, the consideration of the proposed terms of union. During the afternoon session Cashin concluded the debate of the economic report with a savage attack on Smallwood, and an accusation that the public galleries had been "fixed up" during the preceding few days.[23] This had been a common tactic during the period of responsible government, the intention being to heckle the opposing party, and prevent speakers from being heard.[24] Since the proceedings were broadcast this tactic was all the more effective during the Convention. Those listening to the debate on the radio could not distinguish whether applause or jeers came from the galleries or from the members of the Convention. That night Smallwood rose to read a letter from Gordon Bradley, who as chairman of the Ottawa delegation was slated to pilot the terms through the Convention. The letter requested that Bradley's absence be excused due to illness, and that Smallwood pilot the debate on the terms. Bradley may have genuinely been ill (his health was notoriously poor), or this may have been a tactic to allow the much better prepared Smallwood bear the brunt of the debate. In either case, he missed almost all of the debate during the next two months, and failed to produce the doctor's certificate necessary for him to be paid his daily allowance.[25] Higgins objected to Bradley's appointment of Smallwood, on the grounds that only the Convention itself could to do this. McEvoy accepted Higgins' point, and ruled that the chair would appoint a person to steer the report through the committee of the whole. He then appointed Smallwood, ensuring that the confederate with the greatest grasp of the intricacies of union would be able to publicize its benefits.[26]

Smallwood's method of dealing with the terms was ingenious. He read each

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[23] *Ibid.*, 20 November 1947.

[24] Document by W.S. Fielding, published with comment by E.R. Forbes as "Newfoundland Politics in 1921 : A Canadian View", *Acadiensis*, Vol. IX No. 1, Autumn 1979, p.96.

[25] PANL, GN 38, Minutes of Commission Government, 13 February 1948.

[26] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 20 November 1947.

term clause by clause, explaining its meaning and significance. Members then asked questions or made comments on each term, to which Smallwood responded. They would then pass on to the next term. Since the committee of the whole had no restrictions on speakers, Smallwood exploited the opportunity to publicize the specifics of the proposed union through the nightly radio broadcasts. Though the responsible government faction did their best to discredit Smallwood and belittle the benefits of confederation, he was able to describe in great detail the potential benefits of Canadian social programs.[27] During the next twenty sittings Smallwood stood up under a barrage of criticism and questions, making full use of his repetitive oratorical style. At one point, when the chairman told him to stop repeating himself, Smallwood revealed his tactic. The repetition and plain language, he said, were intended to make him "understood to [sic] the people of Newfoundland to whom, and not to this Convention, I am speaking."[28] Many in the responsible government faction were frustrated with Smallwood's belabouring every point, and expressed this on 12 December. Some of the members from rural Newfoundland had already left St. John's for the Christmas break, so it was easy for a few members to disrupt Smallwood by leaving the chamber and denying a quorum. Repeatedly the chairman had to stop Smallwood's speech until members could be brought back into the chamber.[29] When some members refused to return, McEvoy called an emergency meeting of the steering committee to decide the next step. Eventually, he was forced to adjourn the Convention until 5 January.[30] The confederation debate outside was not adjourned however; the propaganda and public appeals continued through the Christmas season.

By September, 1947, the Responsible Government League had belatedly

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[27] See for example debates between Hollett, Higgins and Smallwood in *Ibid.*, 21 November 1947.

[28] *Ibid.*, 5 January 1948.

[29] *Ibid.*, 12 December 1947.

[30] *Evening Telegram*, 13 December 1947.

realized that Smallwood's greatest weapon in the upcoming campaign would be his relative mastery of information about Canada and confederation. He was able to argue effectively the merits of union without fear of contradiction. The League realized that if they tried to counter Smallwood's arguments and were proven wrong, their credibility would be lost. With this in mind, the League set about gathering all the information possible, asking Hollett to take charge of the data collection.[31] During the fall of 1947 the League frantically wrote to various provincial governments, and branches of the federal government, gathering information.[32] Yet on the 12 November, Perlin reported to the executive that the League still lacked the information necessary to battle the confederates. As it did become available, he recommended, it should be passed on to the responsible government faction of the Convention as well.[33]

Unable to wait until the information was gathered, the League began a series of regular broadcasts on VONF on 11 October.[34] But, in the opinion of the Canadian High Commissioner, the speeches lacked fire, and the League had little hope of influencing the electorate.[35] When a League member in Gander, Edward Henley, became concerned that nothing was being done to counter Smallwood's campaign, the League's secretary, Wickford Collins, had to admit they were powerless to do anything.

> I phoned Mr. O'Leary concerning Smallwood's campaign at Gander, and he was of the opinion that we are not yet ready to tackle Smallwood in public. It would be fatal to tackle now, and lose out through lack of information. Smallwood has about three years head

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[31]CNS, RGL Papers, File "Executive Committee Minutes", Minutes of Executive Meeting, 8 September 1947.

[32]*Ibid.*, "Correspondence O'Leary/Collins September - December 1947."

[33]*Ibid.*, 12 November 1947.

[34]These were broadcast every Saturday night at 10:30, *Evening Telegram*, 13 October 1947.

[35]Bridle (ed), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Newfoundland to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 7 November 1947, p.723-4.

> start on us, and is fully prepared with the most detailed information to speak in public. I personally feel that when we are ready we will be able to give him a good roasting over the air, on the hustings, or anywhere we meet him or his associates. It is a bit binding to have to sit back, and watch him sweep all before him, but our turn will come, and I hope it comes soon.[36]

By the end of 1947 the League itself privately admitted its campaign was ineffective, but retained a little optimism:

> Reports from outport districts would indicate that Confederation is high liner at the moment, with Commission Government second in the field. A great deal of bitterness has been stirred up against responsible government by the use of class hatred against the merchant classes. Our radio talks and pamphlets have been in the nature of academic discussion, on our public affairs. However we know our weak points and are well prepared to put on a first class show in 1948. We have six months to go before the referendum, which is a long time to maintain an active political campaign.[37]

The reference to the use of class hatred related to Smallwood's campaign tactic of emphasizing that the responsible government advocates were backed by Water Street merchants. This appealed to both the resentment of St. John's common in rural Newfoundland, and the dislike of the commercial elite that dominated Newfoundland's economic life. It is possible that the realization that the steam had gone out of the Responsible Government League campaign was responsible for some anti-confederates starting in 1948 a political movement dedicated to economic union with the United States.

The responsible government supporters had still failed to work out a co-operative arrangement. On Perlin's initiative, the League passed a resolution on 12 November to approach informally the responsible government bloc to bring about a closer liaison. He hoped that eventually this would develop into a joint

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[36]CNS, RGL Papers, File "Corresp. O'Leary/Collins Sept-Dec 1947, W.L. Collins to E.P. Henley, 19 December 1947.

[37]CNS, RGL Papers, File "Corresp. O'Leary/Collins Sept-Dec 1947, W.L. Collins to Herbert B. Morgan, 29 December 1947.

executive between both groups, that would co-ordinate and direct activities.[38] The lack of co-ordination among the Convention's responsible government group itself may have prevented much coming of these plans in a formal way. A meeting did take place, resulting in an agreement to pair off Convention members with League members to study the confederation terms.[39]

On 5 January, 1948, the Convention resumed debating the proposed confederation terms, with emotions running as high as they had before Christmas. At one point, for example, in the heat of debate, Smallwood challenged Pierce Fudge, a responsible government advocate, to step outside for fisticuffs. Fudge, the larger man by far, immediately rose to his feet, but obeyed when the Chairman ordered him to sit down. Smallwood continued on the offensive, refuting the responsible government faction's argument that the Canadian tax burden was onerous.[40] Cashin led the efforts to counter Smallwood. He emphasized the extent of Canadian taxation, warning of the burden it would impose. This was essentially the same argument that had been used successfully against confederation in 1869.[41] Cashin also warned of the size of the Canadian national debt, arguing that since it was larger per capita than Newfoundland's, union was ill advised.[42] What he failed to realize was that per capita income, and hence the capacity to pay the debt, was far larger in Canada. He had not yet resigned himself to the impossibility of using the American military bases as bargaining chips, and argued that confederation would rob Newfoundland of this asset. Cashin maintained that the Canadians' preparation of documents prior to

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[38] *Ibid.*, File "Executive Committee Minutes," Executive Minutes, 12 November 1947.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] PANL, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 5 January 1948.

[41] James K. Hiller, "Confederation Defeated : The Newfoundland Election of 1869" in *Newfoundland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries : essays in interpretation*, edited by James Hiller and Peter Neary, (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1980).

[42] CNS, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 6 January 1948.

the dispatch of the Ottawa delegation was more evidence of the confederate plot.[43] Smallwood's proposed provincial budget was criticized for not balancing, and the Convention was warned that under confederation Newfoundland could lose Labrador to Quebec.[44]

The responsible government advocates were anxious to end the debate and call the referendum. On 6 January Cashin asked the Commission to inform the Convention of the latest day on which the Convention might make its recommendation for a referendum to be held that spring.[45] The Commission answered that the Secretary of State needed at least one month to deliberate the Convention's recommendations before deciding what options would appear on the ballot. Thus if the referendum was to be held in the spring the Convention had to make its recommendations by the end of January.[46] The Convention was unanimous that this deadline should be met.

At the evening sitting of 13 January Smallwood started his rebuttal of the responsible government faction's arguments. The next day, while Smallwood continued, Higgins moved that the Convention resolve itself into a committee of the whole to consider the confederation terms, and not adjourn until the deliberations were finished. This would close off the debate on the terms, leaving only the forms of government to be discussed. McEvoy informed the Convention that since the matter was so important, and some members had not had the opportunity to speak on the terms, he would use his discretionary powers to postpone the closure motion for two days.[47] On the 16 January McEvoy

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[43] *Ibid.*, 7 January 1948.

[44] *Ibid.*, 8 January 1948.

[45] *Ibid.*, 6 January 1948.

[46] *Ibid.*, 9 January 1948.

[47] *Ibid.*, 14 January 1948.

commented that his action had exercised his "discretion to the utmost limits", and felt the time had come for the Convention to divide on the closure motion.[48] The motion passed unanimously, preventing further adjournment of the debate on the proposed arrangements.[49] The final day of debate on the terms was 17 January. In a last effort to make their points of view known, both sides continued through the night. In the morning, when everyone had had his say, all that remained for the Convention to do was to make its recommendations.[50]

Before the Convention moved on to its next order of business, Cashin asked if the Convention might continue to exist after the recommendations had been made. He thought that it might reconvene from time to time to make recommendations on various aspects of government to the Commonwealth Relations Office. Smallwood, eager to continue using the Convention as a platform to argue for confederation, concurred with Cashin.[51] The Commission had no intention of allowing the Convention to continue to exist as a forum for criticism of itself, and rejected this suggestion. It maintained that the Convention had only one function, suggesting the forms of government to appear on the ballot, and once this was fulfilled it would come to an end.[52]

On 19 January Higgins moved to recommend that commission government and responsible government as it had existed in 1933, be placed on the ballot. Higgins had seconded Smallwood's original confederation motion, and had briefly flirted with confederation after returning from the Ottawa delegation, but now he unreservedly recommended responsible government. The reason, he said, for

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[48] *Ibid.*, 16 January 1948.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Ibid.*, 17 January 1948.

[51] *Ibid.*, 19 January 1948.

[52] CNS, Smallwood Collection, 4.01.005, Walsh to McEvoy, 21 January 1948.

including commission government in the motion was his feeling that the Convention's mandate dictated that more than one form of government be recommended. Higgins then summarized the committee reports, concluding that Newfoundland could survive independently, and indeed could prosper.[53] Smallwood realized that opposition to the motion was futile in the face of the responsible government faction's majority. Yet opposition to the idea that Newfoundland would prosper under responsible government could have great effect on the people listening on the radio. Smallwood led the confederate attack on this point of view:

> Sir, I am against responsible government coming back to Newfoundland. In principle, I think responsible government is right, but in practice, I think it is wrong. I think, if we went back to responsible government we would bring misery and suffering on our people. I think it would be a terrible gamble to take.[54]

Despite this belief he announced his intention to vote for the motion because he believed the people deserved the right to vote on these options.[55] He took this stand to enable him to stake out the high moral ground and then criticise those wishing to restrict the people's choice. In other words, he argued that Newfoundlanders deserved the opportunity to make their views known on the question of confederation even if the majority of the members of the Convention opposed this form of government. Though many confederates followed Smallwood's lead, some did not. Gorden Bradley had returned after a long absence, and intimated he could not support the motion, though he did vote for it when the division was called. Clearly Bradley was tired of the political infighting, and disillusioned with the direction the Convention had taken.

> Unfortunately it became plain from the outset that the Convention was to be the scene of a struggle of ideologies instead of one concerned for the wishes of the people - a political battle ground instead of a

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[53] CNS, GN 10, National Convention Proceedings, 19 January 1948.

[54] *Ibid.*, 19 January 1948.

[55] *Ibid.*

forum of calm investigation.[56]

Perhaps this wariness accounted for his lengthy absences from the Convention. He felt that if the Higgins motion passed it would preclude the Convention recommending any other options.

> Again sir, I would point out that our duty is to recommend forms of government to be submitted to the people. Nowhere in the Convention act do I find anything authorizing us to make recommendations to keep any form of government off the ballot paper, and this resolution is clearly in that category.[57]

On the 21 January McEvoy interrupted the debate to elaborate on the procedure he intended to use to make the Convention's recommendations. He informed the members that he intended to hold a series of polls : responsible government against commission, commission against confederation, and confederation against responsible government. Thus each member would be able to make his preferences known.[58] Surprisingly, none of the members objected to this.

Confident in the success of their motion the responsible government faction made their case. Cashin based his support for the motion on his faith in the strength of the Newfoundland economy. He built his argument around the ineptitude of the Commission, and the opportunities for the future offered by a reopening of the bases agreement.[59] Hollett concluded the responsible government faction's arguments on 22 January by suggesting that the National Convention act required the Convention to recommend either retention of the status quo or resumption of the previous constitution. He felt that under the letters patent of 1934, and the Amulree report, responsible government must be

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[56] *Ibid.*, 22 January 1948.

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] *Ibid.*, 21 January 1948.

[59] *Ibid.*

returned. He held that recommending any form of government other than responsible government or commission government was *ultra vires* the Convention's mandate as set out in the National Convention Act. Smallwood saw an opportunity in Hollett's logic, and rose to a point of order. He thought this amounted to a re-interpretation of the letters patent, and thus Hollett's argument itself was outside the jurisdiction of the Convention. McEvoy agreed with Smallwood, and used his interpretation to prevent Hollett from pursuing this line of argument any further.[60] On 22 January Higgins' motion came to a vote. Almost all members rose to support the motion, with no one opposing.[61]

The following day, 23 January, Smallwood moved his resolution. Since responsible government and commission had already been approved he dropped these from the wording of his motion. He moved that,

> the National Convention desires to recommend to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that the following form of government be placed before the people of Newfoundland in the forthcoming national referendum; namely : confederation with Canada upon the basis submitted to the National Convention on November 6 1947 by the Prime Minister of Canada.[62]

Everyone realized that the motion would fail, but Smallwood was confident that the Commonwealth Relations Office would place confederation on the ballot. Whether this confidence reflected confidential knowledge of Commonwealth Relations Office intentions, or resulted from a political judgment, is an open question. In either event, he assured the people listening to the debate, and the members of the Convention,

> that although the confederates in the Convention are outnumbered

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[60] *Ibid.*, 22 January 1948.

[61] In favour was : Goodridge, Watton, Banfield, Hollett, MacDonald, Starkes, Jones, Kennedy, Hannon, Spencer, Fudge, Ballam, Northcott, Penney, Reddy, Vincent, Bradley, Smallwood, Dawe, Crummey, Burry, Miller, Ryan, McCarthy, Fowler, Roberts, Keough, Fogwill, Butt, Higgins, Hickman, Cashin, Crosbie, Harrington, Cranford, Vardy, Bailey, and Ashbourne. Source : *Ibid.*, 22 January 1948.

[62] *Ibid.*, 23 January 1948.

> almost two to one, although we are a minority in the Convention, our recommendation will be respected by the British government. There is no doubt about it, confederation will be on the ballot paper in he referendum. Our people will get their chance to vote for confederation this spring. The many hundreds of people who have written or telegraphed or telephoned about this matter to me, can be of good cheer, for the British government will protect the democratic rights of our people against all attempts of a mere majority of this Convention.[63]

Smallwood went on to try to defuse the anti-confederate arguments. He explained how anti-confederates in 1869 had lied about the nature of property taxes to create fear. The tactic had worked, he continued, but this time the truth would be known - the federal government would not be imposing property tax. Smallwood also spoke at great length about monopolistic merchants hiding behind the tariff barriers, who had cornered the import trade, inflated prices, and were reaping enormous profits. Everyone recognized the implication that these were "Water Street" merchants, not coincidentally the very people backing responsible government. As time ran out on the day's proceedings, Smallwood made his concluding pitch.

> Sir, I call upon every member of this Convention to vote for this motion. I call upon even the bitterest anti-confederate here to vote for it. Hate confederation all you like. That is your privilege, but do not vote to deny our people of Newfoundland their rights to decide the matter.[64]

When the Convention met next, on Monday 26 January, the emotion charged debate began. Cashin led the spirited attack on Smallwood's attempts to set class against class, a theme that many others adopted for their speeches. He criticized the Canadian social programs that were the basis of the confederate campaign as immoral, and predicted that the children's allowance would be cancelled within two years. He warned that people would be conscripted into the Canadian army, they would have to leave Newfoundland to get work, and property taxes would be imposed.

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[63] *Ibid.*, 23 January 1948.

[64] *Ibid.*

> The fisherman, and I hope they hear my words, will have to pay taxes on every stick and article that he owns - his boats, his nets, his house, his barns, his cattle, and his meadows. That is the price the Newfoundland fisherman will have to pay for the privilege of calling himself a Canadian.[65]

Cashin suggested the confederates were traitors to their country. "Iscariot," he reminded the confederates, "had the decency to hang himself," and suggested the confederates do likewise.[66] He appealed to nationalist emotion.

> To trifle with a people and a country, to compromise the lives of future generations, are [sic] no small thing. Yet that is the very thing that is now being attempted, to the end that we shall cease to exist as an independent country, and that Newfoundlanders shall no longer be Newfoundlanders.[67]

Malcolm Hollett repeated the responsible government factions argument that confederation should be negotiated between two governments. He argued that those who wanted confederation should vote for responsible government in the referendum, and then a confederate party after responsible government had been returned.[68] Gordon Higgins concurred, suggesting a much better deal with Canada could be struck under an elected government, with "a delegation properly informed, assisted by competent advisors, and with the power to negotiate."[69] Bradley, in a rare appearance in the Convention, dismissed the argument that Britain had an obligation to return responsible government. He also defended the Ottawa delegation's right to negotiate.[70] The debate on 27 of January lasted into the next morning. At 4:15 am Smallwood started the rebuttal of the responsible

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[65] *Ibid.*, 26 January 1948.

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.*, 27 January 1948.

[70] *Ibid.*

government arguments. It was the emotional climax of the Convention. He recounted and countered each of the speeches made by the responsible government faction, and finished by daring them to vote for the motion.

> Now with regard to those here who are not going to vote for this motion, it would be very interesting to know why they will not vote for it. ... Sir, there is only one reason they can have. They are afraid to put it on the ballot to let the people vote on it. They are afraid to let the people vote on it, for they fear that the people will vote for it. If they are not afraid, let them vote for this motion. I challenge them, I dare them to vote for this motion, I dare them to let the people decide on the question of confederation.[71]

When Smallwood's speech ended, the Chairman put the question.

In favour of confederation being placed on the ballot were : Banfield, MacDonald, Starkes, Spencer, Ballam, Figary, Vincent, Smallwood, Burry, McCarthy, Roberts, Keough, Newell, and Ashbourne. Absent but having their votes in favour recorded were Hillier and Bradley, for a total of sixteen. Against confederation being on the ballot were : Goodridge, Watton, Hollett, Kennedy, Hannon, Fudge, Northcott, Penney, Reddy, Jackman, Dawe, Crummey, Miller, Ryan, Fowler, Fogwill, Butt, MacCormack, Bailey, Vardy, Cranford, Harrington, Crosbie, Cashin, Hickman, and Higgins. Absent but having their votes against the motion recorded were Job, Jones, and Brown, for a total of twenty nine.[72] The confederates had lost.

McEvoy selected a committee to draft the report to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. On 29 January the report was presented to the Convention for approval. It summarized the course the Convention had taken, and recorded the members' preferences for particular forms of government. Twenty eight of the twenty nine who had voted against the Smallwood motion

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[71] *Ibid.*

[72] *Ibid.*

preferred responsible government.[73] The exception was Job who, though he objected to confederation under the terms offered, was also "deadly opposed to the resumption of responsible government on the old system."[74] He felt that ultimately some form of responsible government should be put into place, but the Commission should be retained for a few years until a simpler form of self-government could be devised.[75] Yet neither Job nor any other Convention member voted for commission government. Only twelve of the sixteen members who voted for the Smallwood motion expressed a preference for confederation; McCarthy, Keough, Newell, and Hillier did not express a preference.[76] The report was approved, and the Convention assembled for the last time on 30 January 1948. In the governor's absence the administrator, Sir L.E. Emerson, presided over the dissolution of the Convention. In his closing speech Emerson related the events that led to the formation of the Convention, and the tasks it had accomplished. He went on to say that,

> Commission government, excellent as it is as a temporary stop-gap in the case of emergency, does not provide the proper spiritual outlet for the development of the political soul of a free people. Their ultimate goal must be democratic government either alone or as a partner in a greater democratic union.[77]

Emerson then formally accepted the Convention's recommendations, and the Convention came to a close.

In the third phase of the Convention the confederates had been able to effectively press their advantage. Bradley, disillusioned with the Convention, stepped down as chairman, and was replaced by J.B. McEvoy. McEvoy, a

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[73] *Ibid.*, 29 January 1948.

[74] CNS, Smallwood Collection, 4.01.006, R.B. Job to F.M. O'Leary, 8 May 1948.

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] PANL, GN 10 National Convention Proceedings, 29 January 1948.

[77] *Ibid.*, 30 January 1948.

partisan confederate, was able to ensure that the confederates' arguments were aired. Devoid of united leadership and short of information, the responsible government advocates were unable to compete with Smallwood in the propaganda war. The responsible government majority in the Convention was able to defeat the confederation motion, but the ballot decision remained in the hands of the Commonwealth Relations Office.

# Chapter 7

## Afterword

In September, 1947, the Commission requested the rural magistrates, and the Ranger Force, which policed much of rural Newfoundland, to report on attitudes toward various forms of government.[1] This was one of the few avenues through which the Commission could judge public opinion. Though the Ranger reports were impressionistic and inconsistent, and did not cover the Avalon Peninsula, they provide the historian with one of the few gauges of the success of the Convention. During the fall of 1947 the rangers reported little interest in the Convention, and overwhelming support for continued Commission.[2] Undoubtedly, the Commission had large public support. It had benefited from the wartime prosperity, had been relatively free of graft and corruption, and had been successful in its fisheries and rural reconstruction program. Yet the rangers feared losing their jobs under any form of government other than commission, and may have overestimated the extent of support for the current system.[3] Though the reports diverge greatly, by the end of 1947 some were reporting greater interest in the proceedings of the Convention, and a shift in public opinion towards confederation. As the ranger in Burin reported :

> In contrast with the past, people are now showing a keen interest in the proceedings of the National Convention and politics are [sic] the chief topic of conversation. The attitude of the people has undergone a sudden change and Commission of Government, which previously had many supporters in this district, would now receive very little support. Confederation with Canada is at present the most popular form of government, but responsible government too, has gained considerable popularity.[4]

A few, such as the ranger in Port Saunders, attributed this change to the publicizing of the terms of union through the Convention broadcasts :

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[1]Tuck, "The Newfoundland Ranger Force, 1935-1950", p.99.

[2]PANL, GN 38/S-2-5-2.

[3]Tuck, "The Newfoundland Ranger Force, 1935-1950", p.101.

[4]PANL, GN 38/S-2-5-2, Burin, 2 December 1947.

> Since my last report on the political views of the people in and around this area a wide and large number have swung their opinions to favour union with Canada, owing to Mr. Smallwood's interesting and informative debates on the laws governing that country and the terms laid down to govern us should we unite.[5]

The ranger in Marystown was more specific about what had changed the attitude of people in his district toward confederation. He reported :

> As the debate on the terms progressed and the different clauses were explained much interest was evident among the people in this area. The main interest was shown when the family allowances and old age pensions were debated. Those people who did not have radios were always questioning those who did with the result that almost everyone became acquainted with those two particular clauses in the confederation terms.[6]

Not only had the Convention raised public awareness and interest, it had made confederation an issue. Indeed, by the time it ended, the Convention had made confederation a popular option.

While the responsible government advocates were celebrating their victory in the Convention, the confederates were launching their campaign. Bradley, as a former member of the House of Assembly, was given the opportunity to use the government radio station. He broadcast a condemnation of the responsible government supporters for having denied the people a chance to decide about confederation, and asked the confederate supporters to telegraph requesting that confederation be placed on the ballot. Smallwood made the same appeal on the commercial station VOCM.[7] The day the Convention closed Smallwood announced that he had been receiving hundreds of telegrams asking that confederation be put on the ballot.[8] Within days he notified the governor that he

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[5]PANL, GN 38/S-2-5-2, Port Saunders, 22 December 1947.

[6]PANL, GN 38/S-2-5-2, Marystown, 7 January 1948.

[7]Jamieson, "I saw the fight for confederation." p.85.

[8]*Evening Telegram*, 31 January 1948.

had received 50,000 signatures.[9]

This played right into the hands of the Commonwealth Relations Office, which had been worried about what to do if the Convention recommended against placing confederation on the ballot. They saw no future for Newfoundland outside of the Canadian union, and thought that if the question was not put right away it would have to be shelved indefinitely.[10] Addison, who was now Lord Privy Seal, prepared a memorandum for the prime minister. He regretted that the Convention had not lived up to his hopes for a body to look "dispassionately" at various forms of government and clarify the issues. He [redacted] it would be intolerable if the opponents of confederation in the Convention were successful in a maneuver which would prevent the matter being submitted to the people of Newfoundland," and thought that the proper course of action was to put confederation on the ballot.[11] The wording of the ballot was important, in Addison's view, and responsible government should be defined as "responsible government as it existed in 1933."[12] In other words, though Newfoundland could return to the measure of self-government it had enjoyed in 1933, no additional powers would be granted. Newfoundland would not be allowed to enact the operative clause of the Statue of Westminster, and accept full dominion status on the Canadian model.[13] Thus the Commonwealth Relations Office could continue to exercise some measure of control over Newfoundland's affairs through the governor. Attlee discussed Addison's memorandum with the governor, who was

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[9] Jamieson, "I saw the fight for Confederation", p.85.

[10] Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Canadian High Commissioner in Britain to External Affairs, 20 January 1948, p.781-2.

[11] *Ibid.*, Addison to Prime Minister, 3 February 1948, p.807-9.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.*

in London, and agreed with the proposals.[14] The confederates' telegram campaign gave credence to the Commonwealth Relations Office's announcement that since many Newfoundlanders wanted the confederation option on the ballot, the CRO was adding it to the two options that the Convention had recommended. On 2 March 1948 the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Philip Noel-Baker, announced that confederation would be on the ballot.[15]

The wording of the option, "responsible government as it existed in 1933," was significant. For the British it meant less than full dominion status, and for the responsible government supporters it meant not less self government than Newfoundland had enjoyed in 1933. For many Newfoundlanders it meant government as had existed in 1933 - graft, corruption, pork barreling, and the depression. During the referendum campaign, the confederates did what they could to reinforce that image in the popular imagination.

In the fierce referendum campaign that followed Newfoundland was polarized into two rival camps. [redacted] polarization had a cost for the labour movement. The Newfoundland Federation of Labour, the St. John's District Labour party, and the Newfoundland National party were all split by the confederation issue. The official federation stance was to avoid taking sides in the debate, but Ron Fahey, the president, came out in favour of responsible government along with Frank Fogwill, William Gillies, and others. Other federation members, including Charles Ballam, William Frampton, and Harold Horwood were confederates. This division became antagonistic during the referendum campaign, and both the St. John's District Labour party and the Newfoundland National party collapsed. The experience made many in the

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[14]Bridle (ed.), *Documents*, Assistant Private Secretary to the Prime Minster to the Assistant Secretary CRO, 4 February 1948, p.810.

[15]Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, p.255.

labour movement wary of direct political involvement, and in 1948 the federation voted to disallow executive members from running for political office.[16] This marked the end of the Newfoundland labour movement's attempt to follow the example of the British Labour Party, and opened a period of non-direct political action.

Soon after the closing of the Convention another political movement emerged, one that advocated an economic union with the United States. Many Convention members thought that reciprocity with the United States was the key to a prosperous future for Newfoundland. Several attempts in the Convention to achieve this had been made, to no avail.[17] A letter in the *Evening Telegram* had reported in December, 1947, that a league for union with the United States had been formed.[18] While some of the old guard of the National Convention, Cashin and Hollett for example, affiliated themselves with the Responsible Government League, some of the younger anti-confederates shared a disdain for the old-line politicians, and looked for a group of their own. Cashin and his followers in the Convention, and the Responsible Government League, had proven to be no match for Smallwood, and were not an attractive option to many in Newfoundland who were wary of the old style politicians of the pre-commission days. Furthermore, it was apparent that during the preceding months the confederates had changed from a small fringe group to a major segment of the population, and the established groups were incapable of reversing that trend. The opportunity for these young turks to organize came in March 1948, when William Perlin, a businessman and the younger brother of A.B. Perlin, began gathering together a group dedicated to achieving economic union with the United States. They felt that the confederate campaign was successfully convincing people that a return to responsible government was a return to the poverty of the 1930s, and "questioned

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[16] Gillespie, "A History of the Newfoundland Federation of Labour", p.125.

[17] See pp. 66-68, 75-79.

[18] *Evening Telegram*, 10 December 1947.

the ability of the reactionary Responsible Government League to surmount this hurdle in the upcoming referendum."[19] The young reporter Donald Jamieson became involved, along with his friend Geoff Sterling, the editor of the *Sunday Herald*. The group needed a prominent person to add credibility, and convinced Chesley Crosbie to lead the new Economic Union Association.[20]

Crosbie's decision to lead the Association angered the Responsible Government League, who feared that if responsible government supporters were divided the electorate would be confused, and the confederates would benefit. Cashin, on behalf of the League, approached the Economic Union Association to suggest joint radio broadcasts. The later declined, and the League and the Economic Union Association continued to function separately.[21] The division of the responsible government supporters was all the worse since the relationship between Cashin's group and the league was only an alliance, not one of complete co-operation. Even this alliance was short lived. It is possible to speculate that had the Convention not split into two factions less disillusionment might have existed in the responsible government ranks, and there may have been only one group advocating that form of government during the referendum campaign. The League's fear that the division would benefit the confederates was borne out, and the lack of co-operation did prove to be a problem.

The small Confederate Association that was launched on 26 March had no such organizational problems. It had existed informally for months as a small group of Convention members and a handful of confederates outside. While the Responsible Government League had been debating policy and drafting minutes, the confederates had been campaigning and eliciting support. In contrast to the League, the Confederate Association drew the support of people from a large

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[19] Jamieson, "I saw the Fight for Confederation," p.88.

[20] *Ibid.*, p.89.

[21] *Ibid.*, p.90.

variety of backgrounds, including the labour movement. Two of the most notable confederates from the labour movement were Gregory Power and Harold Horwood.[22] Bradley was president of the organization, and Smallwood assumed the position of campaign manager. The other members were drawn largely from confederation supporters in the Convention and the labour movement. Under the undisputed leadership of Smallwood the Association continued the campaign started in the Convention. Financed by the donations of Liberal Party of Canada supporters, the confederates ran a professional campaign in comparison with that of the responsible government supporters. As they had done in the Convention, the confederates focussed on Canadian social programs, notably childrens' allowance, unemployment insurance, and old age pensions. Slowly, confederate support grew as the referendum approached.[23]

The referendum held on 3 June, 1948, did not result in a majority for either form of government. Responsible government received 44.5% of the votes, confederation 41.1%, and commission 14.3%. In contrast to the election to the Convention, turnout was extremely high, in excess of 88% of eligible voters. The Commonwealth Relations Office had stipulated that in the event that no form of government received a clear majority, the form with the lowest support would be dropped from the ballot, and a second referendum held. The second referendum was held on 22 July, and had a slightly lower turnout at 84%. The result was a slim majority for confederation, 52.3% as opposed to 47.4%, a majority of some 7,000 votes.

The Canadian government quickly announced that it was willing to start drafting terms of union. A negotiating team was appointed by the Commission, consisting of Smallwood, Bradley, McEvoy, Crosbie, Walsh, St. John's

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[22]Gwyn, *Smallwood : The Unlikely Revolutionary*, p.79.

[23]For a discussion of the campaign see Gwyn, *The Unlikely Revolutionary*, and Smallwood, *I Chose Canada*, p.285-325.

businessman Gordon Winter, and the manager of the Grand Falls paper mill, Philip Gruchy. The terms negotiated were essentially the same as those arrived at by the Ottawa delegation a year earlier. The Responsible Government League made a few desperate attempts to have the process of union declared unconstitutional, but to no avail. They argued that responsible government had to be returned once Newfoundland was self supporting, and that only an elected government could negotiate union. The Responsible Government League had A.P. Herbert, who had retained many friendships in Newfoundland since his visit as part of the goodwill mission in 1943, present a petition to the British Parliament making these arguments. They also appealed to the Newfoundland Supreme Court to stop the negotiations. Justice Dunfield dismissed the action, and the League's efforts failed.[24] At the stroke of midnight, 31 March, 1949, Newfoundland became a province of Canada.

Union with Canada was not the break with the past that some have assumed. The factions and alliances formed in the Convention lasted into provincial politics, and formed the basis of political parties - regardless of ideological differences. The Canadian government thought it inappropriate for the British appointed Commission to administer a Canadian province while a provincial election was being organized, and decided upon a remarkable solution.[25] A.J. Walsh was appointed as the province's first lieutenant governor, and he, in turn, appointed Smallwood premier of an interim government. By this act the federal government ensured that the existing divisions on the confederation issue would be continued into provincial politics, since the victorious confederates were made the government, and the anti-confederates were left to be the opposition. Without a legislature, Premier Smallwood administered the province for the almost two months before the first provincial

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[24]For an account of these efforts see W.J. Browne *Eighty-Four Years a Newfoundlander*, (St. John's : W.J. Browne, 1981) p.313-318. See also Responsible Government League Papers in Center for Newfoundland Studies, MUN.

[25]Gwyn, *Unlikely Revolutionary*, p.118.

election on 27 May, 1949. Smallwood's ties to the governing Liberals in Ottawa, and the financial support he had received from the party supporters in Canada, had ensured that the Smallwood government would bear the Liberal stripe into the election. This gave the Liberal party an enormous advantage. They had control of the machinery of government, and thus access to patronage, and were the only organized group entering the election. The other confederates found places in the Liberal government. Charles Ballam and William Keough, for example, became Minister of Fisheries and Co-operatives and Minister of Labour respectively. Some confederates moved into federal politics as well. Gordon Bradley and Thomas Ashbourne, for example, were elected to the House of Commons on 27 June, 1949. Bradley then became Newfoundland's first representative in the federal cabinet as Secretary of State.[26] Ray Petten, who as treasurer of the Confederate Association had elicited the financial support of Canadian Liberal party supporters, was one of two Newfoundlanders appointed to the Senate in that year.[27] Few of the principal confederates were not rewarded with positions or sinecures of some kind.[28] For his three month stint as Convention chairman, John B. McEvoy was given a $ 3,000 honorarium.[29]

Since the Confederates had assumed the mantle of the Liberal party, the responsible government supporters were left to become the Progressive Conservative party. The remnants of the Responsible Government League, notably John Higgins, secretary of the League, Frank Fogwill and Leonard Miller of the Convention, and Raymond Fahey of the Newfoundland Federation of Labour, made up the Conservative party in the legislature. D.I. Jackman, a Convention member who had been involved in the Economic Union Association

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[26] *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, edited by G.P. Normandin (Ottawa : Government of Canada, 1950).

[27] Gwyn, *The Unlikely Revolutionary*, p.100.

[28] Normandin (ed.), *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*.

[29] PANL, GN 38, Minutes of Commission, 17 February 1948.

was also a Conservative member of the House of Assembly. Peter Cashin remained outside the party, and sat as an independent. Pierce Fudge and Michael Harrington were unsuccessful in their bids to get elected. By the election of 1951 Cashin had been brought into the party as leader. Despite Cashin's charisma, the Conservatives suffered a net loss of one seat in this election. Hollett succeeded Cashin as leader, but for almost two decades the Conservatives remained restricted to the areas of anti-confederate strength, and hence restricted to the opposition. In federal politics, Gordon Higgins became a member of Parliament for St. John's East. Most members of the Economic Union Association faded from the political scene. Some, like Donald Jamieson, re-emerged on the political scene later. Chesley Crosbie, who had refused to sign the terms of union he had helped to negotiate, never returned to politics.[30]

This division of the party system into Liberal-confederate / Conservative-anti-confederate extended beyond the elected leadership of the parties. The geographic and religious cleavages that came out in the referendum campaign lasted well into post confederation politics as Liberal / Conservative party affiliations. The result was that areas of support for confederation became safe Liberal seats, and the Conservatives were restricted to the anti-confederate areas. In essence the Avalon Peninsula and Roman Catholic areas continued to support the opposition, while rural Newfoundland and Protestant areas voted for Smallwood's government. This helped secure the Liberal hegemony of the political system that lasted until 1971.[31]

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[30]Normandin (ed.), *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, and *Encylopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, ed. J.R. Smallwood (St. John's : Newfoundland Book Publishers (1967) ltd., 1980) Vol. 1.

[31]These themes are developed in Peter Neary, "Party Politics in Newfoundland, 1949-71 : A Survey and Analysis" in Hiller and Neary, *Newfoundland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries : Essays in Interpretation.*

# Chapter 8

## Conclusion

Many thought the National Convention was a waste of time and money. The political scientist S.J.R. Noel felt that, "For all the effect of its decision, the National Convention might never have met."[1] The historian David Mackenzie reached a similar conclusion:

> The National Convention had been a curious exercise. Despite its espousal of democracy and the excitement and interest it provoked, it had, in the final analysis proved itself to be virtually ineffective.[2]

Even while it was ongoing the Convention was thought to be a failure. As the *Evening Telegram* quipped on 8 January, 1948 :

> Call the National Convention a waste of time; call it a stalemate in the squabble between opposing forces, call it a futile expenditure of energy and money - call the Convention anything, but out of consideration for Newfoundland's respect in the eyes of the world, it is suggested that the authorities call the Convention off.[3]

It lasted for seventeen months, cost nearly $400,000, and when it ended the Commonwealth Relations Office did not accept its recommendation, and placed confederation on the ballot.[4] Indeed, once the Convention was divided into confederate and responsible government camps by the Smallwood motion of 1 October, 1946, there was little change in the personnel of the two factions. The division on Penney's motion was 18 in favour of a delegation to Ottawa, and 25 in favour of delaying the matter. After fourteen months the division was 16 in favour of recommending confederation be placed on the ballot, and 29 against. Only Figary and Roberts moved into the confederate camp, and they were more than made up for by Higgins, Vardy, Ryan, Miller, and Watton joining with the

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[1] Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, p. 255.

[2] Mackenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle*., p.194.

[3] *Evening Telegram*, 8 January 1948.

[4] *Evening Telegram*, 30 January 1948.

responsible government advocates. Thus it can be seen that fourteen months of debate, two delegations, and twelve committee reports had little effect on the views of most members of the Convention.

But an assessment of the success of the Convention must be based on an understanding of British objectives. The Dominions Office and Commission designed it with several things in mind. First, it would live up to the letter of the pledge made in 1933 and reiterated in 1943. Second, it would raise the issue of confederation with Canada, something Britain could not do directly without risking a backlash against confederation from Newfoundlanders who resented British interference. The Convention's terms of reference, its constitutional advisor, its chairman, the chairman's instructions, and the Chadwick-Jones report, were all put in place to ensure confederation would be considered. Third, they hoped it would raise public interest in Newfoundland's constitutional future, and be an exercise in democracy after a long political hiatus.

All of these things were achieved, though not necessarily in the way the British envisioned they would be. They intended the Convention to discuss the Chadwick-Jones report and the state of the economy, and come to the conclusion that Newfoundland could not maintain an adequate standard of living without external aid. The British would continue to refuse aid, and had arranged for Canada to offer terms of union. Then, they hoped, the Convention would recommend that union with Canada be one of the options on the ballot. Unfortunately for the British plans, confederation became an issue before the economic situation had been examined, and the resulting partisan fighting split the Convention into two groups. As a result of this the economic and finance reports became responsible government propaganda. The confederates in the Convention were able to have the fragility of the Newfoundland economy discussed, however. As well, the British successfully closed the door on financial aid, and the Canadians offered terms of union. Union with the United States proved to be a nonstarter. Meanwhile, the Convention was a successful exercise in raising public awareness, and the popularity of confederation.

The vehicle for the increase in public interest and support for confederation was the broadcasting of the Convention debates. Once the defeat of the first Smallwood motion made it apparent that the majority of the Convention could not be won over, the confederates spoke to their listening audience - using the debates to convince the people that responsible government meant a return to poverty, and confederation meant prosperity. The Broadcasting Corporation estimated that there were 37,676 radios in Newfoundland in 1945.[5] This would have been approximately one radio for each eleven people, so few people would have not had at least occasional access to a radio. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many people gathered in neighbours' houses to listen intently to each evening's broadcast, though one suspects this was mostly the case during the final few dramatic weeks of the confederation debate. In all, 256 hours and 45 minutes of the 305 hours of recordings were broadcast.[6] Unfortunately, it is not known what editing criteria may have been used, but one may be sure the confederate message, as well as the particulars of the other forms of government, got through loud and clear. Judging by the ranger reports, these broadcasts played a pivotal role in educating the people and convincing them to vote for confederation.

The Convention not only had a role in developing a popular political consciousness, but also bridged the political gap between pre and post-confederation Newfoundland. One of the ways it did this was by training a new political elite. After fifteen years without national democratic institutions few potential leaders were familiar with parliamentary procedure. The Convention fulfilled these functions, and left an inheritance of politicians to the post confederation province. The most important of these new politicians was Smallwood, for whom the Convention provided the vehicle for his rise from political obscurity to prominence. He was anathema to Newfoundland's traditional elite and without the Convention would not have achieved a position

[5]CNS, Transportation and Communication Report of the National Convention.

[6]CNS, Galgay Papers, File #36, Note on Broadcast of the Convention, File #36.

of power. Without access to government largesse or mercantile influence, a person like Smallwood would have found it difficult to establish island-wide support. But the political forum of the Convention rewarded those with political sense and oratorical skills. Through the medium of the radio one could establish oneself as a national politician. The bridging function extended over more than the training of politicians. Through their investigations they became aware of the problems and potential of the Newfoundland economy, and articulated many of the policies that were later adopted.

The National Convention had been a curious exercise, but it had not been ineffective. It had popularized confederation, and educated the people to the opportunities that union with Canada presented. It also launched a new political elite, one with a typically post-war agenda of creating a social welfare state. As such, the radical transformations in Newfoundland since 1949 are due, in large part, to the Convention.

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# Appendix A

| District | Name | Number of Votes |
|---|---|---|
| Bay de Verde | P. Wellington Crummey | Acclamation |
| Bay Roberts | Wilfred Dawe | 718, elected |
| | Leonard T. Stick | 353 |
| | William E. Mercer | 198 |
| | Adrian Dawe | 101 |
| | Allan Morgan | 88 |
| | Allan A. O'Keefe | 77 |
| Bell Island | David I. Jackman | 2,045, elected |
| | Maxwell Huchings | 608 |
| | John F. Flemming | 57 |
| Bonavista Center | Joseph R. Smallwood | 2,129, elected |
| | Kitchner Pritchett | 277 |
| Bonavista East | F. Gorden Bradley | 1,039, elected |
| | Edward G. Cook | 490 |
| Bonavista North | Samuel F. Vincent | Acclamation |
| Bonavista South | Kenneth M. Brown | Acclamation |
| Burgeo | Percy Figary | 668, elected |
| | Charles L. Clarke | 551 |
| | Frances Pike | 313 |
| Burin East | Edward P. Reddy | 1,091, elected |
| | Frank Pearce | 730 |
| | George R. Bartlett | 300 |
| | Thomas LeFeuvre | 167 |
| Burin West | Daniel Hillier | 857, elected |
| | John R. Dixon | 644 |
| Carbonear | Albert E. Penny | 1,045, elected |
| | Graham W. Howell | 761 |
| Ferryland | Albert J. Goodridge | 1,485, elected |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Gregory L. Greene | 817 |
| Fogo | Alfred Watton, Jr. | Acclamation |
| Fortune Bay | William J. Banfield | Acclamation |
| Grand Falls | Malcolm L. Hollett | 2,324, elected |
| | Malcolm McDonald | 1,495, elected |
| | James L. Hanniford | 1,076 |
| | Norman Munn | 725 |
| | Phillip J. Ryan | 271 |
| | Cyril L. Courage | 264 |
| | Ignatius Robinson | 190 |
| | John A. Spencer | 170 |
| | Patrick T. Brown | 102 |
| Green Bay | Roland G. Starkes | 1,130, elected |
| | Sydney T. Jones | 345 |
| | Cyril C. Pelly | 256 |
| | Truman S. Short | 213 |
| Harbour Grace | Colin G. Jones | 677, elected |
| | Alfred E. Simmons | 663 |
| | Michael Jones | 142 |
| | Thomas Collett | 81 |
| Harbour Main | Thomas Kennedy | 1,016, elected |
| | J.A. Hannon | 889, elected |
| | J.J. Crawley | 780 |
| | M. Devereaux | 481 |
| | Gregory C. Devereaux | 386 |
| | J. St. John | 313 |
| | J.J. Terry | 289 |
| Hermitage | John T. Spencer | Acclamation |
| Humber | Pierce Fudge | 2,731, elected |
| | Charles H. Ballam | 1,624, elected |
| | William C. Janes | 992 |
| | Martha Hann | 590 |
| | Robert K. Prowse | 459 |
| Labrador | Rev. Lester L. Burry | 623, elected |
| | P. Stevenson | 114 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | J. Rockwood | 111 |
| | L Brazil | 75 |
| | P. Bradley | 61 |
| Lewisporte | Archibald Northcott | 453, elected |
| | Joseph J. Thompson | 260 |
| | Sydney Wells | 180 |
| | Douglas Rideout | 150 |
| Placentia East | Leonard J. Miller | 1,073, elected |
| | Gregory J. Power | 594 |
| | James P. Verran | 584 |
| Placentia West | Dennis L. Ryan | 929, elected |
| | James McCarthy | 622 |
| Port au Port | Michael J. McCarthy | 548, elected |
| | Michael J. Abbott | 445 |
| | William B. Hogan | 277 |
| Port de Grave | Joseph Fowler | 536, elected |
| | Ralph R. Wood | 373 |
| | Frederick Hussey | 173 |
| St. Barbe | Edgar L. Roberts | Acclamation |
| St. George's | William J. Keough | 828, elected |
| | Temple Butler | 526 |
| St. John's City East | Gordon F. Higgins | 4,998, elected |
| | Edgar L. Hickman | 3,554, elected |
| | Robert B. Job | 3,019, elected |
| | W. Gordon Warren | 2,584 |
| | William Roberts | 2,356 |
| | William W. Gillies | 1,861 |
| | Wickford Collins | 1,604 |
| | William J. Frampton | 1,571 |
| | George Whiteley | 377 |
| St. John's City West | Chesley Crosbie | 5,770, elected |
| | Peter J. Cashin | 4,685, elected |
| | Michael Harrington | 2,431, elected |
| | James A. Gibbs | 2,181 |
| | Frances B. Holmes | 1,743 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Eric Bowring | 1,583 |
| | Richard Cramm | 1,299 |
| | Phillip Forsey | 1,076 |
| | Richard R. Parsons | 994 |
| | Joseph D. Ashley | 876 |
| | George Wilkinson | 517 |
| | Frank Bennett | 225 |
| St. John's East Ex. | Frank D. Fogwill | 857, elected |
| | Patrick J. Shea | 629 |
| | John A. Byrne | 526 |
| | Eric W. Clarke | 308 |
| St. John's West Ex. | Albert B. Butt | 1,411, elected |
| | Charles Penny | 1,148 |
| | Frank Viguers | 625 |
| St. Mary's | John J. MacCormack | Acclamation |
| Trinity Centre | Edmund C. Cranford | 772, elected |
| | Solomon Drodge | 483 |
| | Eldred Mercer | 245 |
| Trinity North | Reuban T. Vardy | 726, elected |
| | Joseph A. Pearcy | 373 |
| | Andrew Green | 272 |
| | Albert T. Pittman | 242 |
| | Whitefield Laite | 221 |
| | Frederick A. Day | 140 |
| Trinity South | Charles L. Bailey | 575, elected |
| | Carman G. Button | 356 |
| | Hubert J. Byrant | 268 |
| | William Stentaford | 180 |
| Twillingate | Thomas Ashbourne | 535, elected |
| | John R. Manuel | 378 |
| | Stanley J. Andrews | 326 |
| White Bay | Isaac Newell | 2,131, elected |
| | P. Pomeroy | 532 |

# Appendix B

**Committees established September 30 1946**

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Fisheries : Brown (Convenor), Job, Goodridge, Crosbie, Bradley, Ashbourne, Hillier, Reddy, Fudge, Figary

Public Finance : Cashin (Convenor), Job, Crosbie, Hickman, Crummey, Keough, Penny, Goodridge, Ballam, Cranford

Forestry : Fudge (Convenor), Cashin, Dawe, MacDonald, Roberts, Starkes, Brown, Vincent, Northcott, Bailey

Mining : Higgins (Convenor), Hollett, Banfield, Miller, Jackman, Vardy, Fowler, McCarthy, Jones, Kennedy

Agriculture : Butt (Convenor), McCormack, Fogwell, Keough, Hannon, Ballam, Spencer, McCarthy, Jones, Kennedy

Local Industries : Hickman (Convenor), Reddy, Dawe, Hillier, Penney, Vincent, McCormack, Starkes, Cranford, Jackman

Education : Hollett (Convenor), Fowler, Jones, Fogwell, Spencer, Miller, Harrington, Smallwood, Ryan, Newell

Public Health and Welfare : Ashbourne (Convenor), Newell, Roberts, Higgins, Harrington, Kennedy, Banfield, Burry, Crummey, Vardy

Transportation : Bradley (Convenor), Smallwood, Hannon, Figary, Northcott, Ryan, Bailey, Walton, Butt, MacDonald