

In recent months, the manufacture of non-essential goods has been curtailed or eliminated entirely. The compulsory mobilization of material resources has been progressively and selectively effected by a highly efficient though exceedingly complex system of economic controls. I might cite the curtailment in the production of motor vehicles and a great variety of other articles in which metals are used, as for example, stoves, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, refrigerators and radios. I might also mention the drastic limitations placed upon the use of silk and rubber.

These and many other measures have been taken progressively, in order to make materials available to our war industries as they have been expanded. Already, the rationing of some commodities for civilian use has begun. If we are to achieve a total effort, far more drastic curtailments will follow.

The whole business of mobilizing material resources is not spectacular; it is far from pleasant; but it is the real foundation of a total war effort. The government has never hesitated to take any of the necessary steps at the moment it was believed they were essential.

I turn now to the question of the mobilizing of "man-power", which term, by the way, when it is used without definite restriction, is intended to comprehend "woman-power" as well. I wish to speak more particularly of the means of mobilizing the additional man-power and woman-power required to maintain the existing effort, and to develop the enlarged programme.

National selective service is the method by which the government proposes to accomplish the mobilization of man-power on an extended scale. Let me define national service as it is understood by the government. By national service is meant any form of service, either voluntary or compulsory, which contributes directly to Canada's war effort. By national selective service is meant the selection of men and women for the various forms of national service according to the method or methods calculated to produce the most satisfactory results. In order to be selective, national service does not necessarily need to be compulsory. Voluntary service is also selective. The army, for example, does not accept every man who offers to enlist. In finding the right place for a man, no quality is likely to count for more than willingness to serve. Compulsion is only of value where it serves to ensure a greater total effort. Wherever necessary and of value in increasing Canada's war effort, the government is prepared to employ compulsion. It would, however, be a waste of effort to

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engage a small army of officials to compel people to do what they are perfectly ready and willing to do without compulsion.

In announcing that national selective service is the method by which the government proposes to accomplish the mobilization of man-power on an extended scale, the government is not announcing a new policy. What we propose to do is to extend what, in fact, we have been doing right along, that is, to apply the principle progressively. In other words, we intend to continue to extend the application of national selective service to meet new needs as they arise.

As I have already said, this policy, too, is not new, nor is it being advanced to-day for the first time, or as a consequence of high-pressure methods employed to influence the independence of members of parliament. The principle itself, as I have already explained, was approved by this parliament in June, 1940. It has already been applied to some extent. On November 12 last, I made it very plain to parliament that, with respect to the mobilization of man-power, the government's policy was one of national selective service; and, also, that an extension of the application of compulsory selective service—conscription, if you will—was a part of that policy. Let me repeat my exact words as reported in Hansard of 1941, page 4321:

So far as conscription stands for compulsory selective national service, that is a principle which this government has embodied in its National Resources Mobilization Act passed at a previous session of this parliament. As to how rapidly that principle should be applied, and how far it should be extended, is a matter which the government must decide and will decide in the light of all the knowledge which it has with respect to the needs of our war effort and the position of the country in meeting them.

I want it to be distinctly understood that so far as the principle of compulsory selective national service is concerned for Canada, in Canada, I stand for that principle. I have never taken any other stand. It is the position that I have held all along. It has been applied in connection with military training, and applied in a number of other directions I might mention. How much further it will be applied the house will learn as the government takes its decisions on that matter.

I did not, at that time, announce any decisions as to its further application. Such an announcement would hardly have been appropriate at the close of a session which had already completed all its major business. I felt that, in fairness to parliament, announcements on such an important matter should be reserved for a new session, when members would have adequate opportunity for the fullest consideration and debate.