

Plebiscite Act

My answer is this: All those who will be liable to be called for service overseas, if conscription is imposed, should be entitled to vote on the plebiscite.

The Prime Minister said that he wants to know the opinion of the people, and the Secretary of State also said it is the desire of the government that the fullest possible opportunity should be accorded the people of Canada to express their view upon the particular question which will be submitted.

It is only reasonable that those who will be called upon to pay the bill should be the first to be asked their opinion. The youth of military age, who are directly involved because they are the ones who will be called upon to pay the blood tax, should have something to say. According to the Militia Act all male inhabitants of Canada between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except those exempted, are liable to military service. Consequently all those people should be entitled to vote in the plebiscite. There is a well known principle in the British constitution: No taxation without representation. The Prime Minister rightly said that parliament derived its power from the people, and it has been emphasized that this is the most democratic measure that has ever been introduced in this parliament. Yet some of those most concerned, because they will have to pay the consequences of this measure with their blood, will be deprived of an opportunity of expressing their opinion. The Prime Minister has said that the millions of dollars required are coming from the people, but those who pay those millions have been consulted. The man-power is also coming from the people, and all those who are liable to be conscripted should be consulted. It would be a poor democracy which would have one law for human life and an entirely preferential law for property and wealth.

I do not intend to say any more in support of this amendment, but in conclusion I should like to quote the final words used by the Secretary of State when he introduced the resolution which preceded this bill, as reported at page 754 of *Hansard*:

At a time when we are fighting to maintain the democratic way of life throughout the world, let us endeavour in every way to maintain it in our own country.

Mr. LACOMBE: Youth, as much as any other category of electors, should be entitled to vote in the coming plebiscite. These are the men who will have to bear all the sacrifices called for by the government. They will have to fulfil the obligation to serve. They also will have to pay, in the years to come, the terrific costs of this war. The government cannot assign them duties without granting them equivalent rights. Every Canadian

[Mr. Raymond.]

youth who has reached the age of eighteen should have an opportunity of voting in the coming plebiscite, not only those who are serving but also all those who will reach the age of eighteen on or before the date when the plebiscite will be held. For the youth of my country I request this act of justice. I request parliament and the government to fulfil the magnificent duty toward the youth of Canada which may be mobilized for the defence of Canada and even for overseas service, if ever—and may God prevent it—the government is released from its sacred pledges and its solemn commitments.

Therefore I readily second the amendment of the hon. member for Beauharnois-Laprairie, but I suggest that every man and every woman over eighteen years of age should have the privilege of voting in the plebiscite.

Amendment negatived on division.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall subsection 1 of section 4 carry?

Mr. MacNICOL: If we are not taking the paragraphs separately, I should like to ask a question about paragraph (b), which reads:

(b) is a British subject by birth or naturalization.

I wanted to inquire if, when the enumerators are compiling the lists, they will have to be shown the naturalization papers of those who are not of British birth.

Mr. McLARTY: I believe there is no oath required by the enumerator to show that a person is a naturalized subject, or that the production of papers or production of naturalization paper is necessary, if he is resident within that polling subdivision.

Mr. MacNICOL: The empire is in a life and death struggle, you know.

Mr. McLARTY: Perhaps we might call it six o'clock, and I will check the regulations carefully.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

After Recess

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: Section 4.

Mr. McLARTY: When the committee rose the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol) was inquiring whether enumerators would require some evidence of a person being a British subject, especially if he were naturalized; whether the naturalization papers would be required to be produced. The provisions under the regulations are the same