

NATIONAL SECURITY—THE ISSUE IN THE PLEBISCITE

*An Appeal to the Canadian Electorate for an Affirmative Vote
on April 27th, 1942*

AN ADDRESS BROADCAST BY

The Right Honourable W. L. MACKENZIE KING, M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

I wish to speak to you to-night, my fellow Canadians, on a matter which, at this time of war, is of first importance—of first importance to the present position of our country, and to its future security; and, therefore, of real concern to the homes and lives of all.

Government Seeks a Free Hand

On Monday, the 27th of this month, you will be asked to give the government a free hand in the discharge of its duty in carrying on the war. This may seem to you a strange request. What may seem stranger still is that this request is being made at a time of war. All of us, I believe, realize that, in war time, a government has greater need for a free hand than in peace time. Why then, you ask, does the government at this time of war, come to us for a free hand?

The answer is not, as you might suppose, that the government lacks full legal power for the conduct of the war. The hands of the government are not tied either by the law or the constitution. The government has been given by parliament much wider powers for wartime than it commands in peacetime. It is important that you should understand, that at the present time, as far as legal power goes, the government is perfectly free to take any action which a majority in parliament will support. This will continue to be true of the power of the Government at Ottawa to the end of the war.