

and will be in the future in both those countries, was one of endeavouring to take the position that would best serve to bring about cooperation among all the governments concerned, in the way which would help most to further the effectiveness of the common war effort.

Mr. T. L. CHURCH (Broadview): Might I ask the Prime Minister a question? In view of what the Prime Minister has said about north and south America in Washington, can any action be taken by Canada now without consulting Britain and the other dominions? We have a duty to the other dominions and to the empire, and I think they should be consulted before any action is taken.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): My hon. friend says something about what I said in Washington about south America. May I say that to my recollection I never uttered a single word with respect to south America while I was in Washington. The trouble with my hon. friend and many others who come from Toronto is that they often take too literally everything that appears in a certain section of the press.

## COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE

STATEMENT OF MR. GODBOUT IN MONTREAL ON  
JANUARY 26

On the orders of the day:

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): I desire to direct a question to the Prime Minister, based upon a report of an important and significant speech delivered last night by the premier of Quebec at Montreal, in which he is reported to have said:

We have Mr. King, who has always been against conscription.

And again

We have at the head of the Liberal party Mr. King, who is an anti-conscriptionist.

And again

Mr. King is against conscription.

Is the statement of Mr. Godbout correct? Is there any undertaking, understanding or commitment, express or implied, existing between himself and Mr. Godbout, or between himself and any other person, to the effect that no action will be taken to provide for compulsory military service overseas, even if the plebiscite is answered in the affirmative and he is released from his commitment?

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): May I say to my hon. friend, in the first place, that I have nothing before me and he has nothing before him with

respect to what Mr. Godbout is alleged to have said last night. I am therefore not in a position to say whether or not any remarks attributed to the premier of Quebec have been correctly reported.

That, however, is not as important as a direct answer to the question with respect to my position in regard to conscription both within Canada and for service overseas, in relation to the past, to the present and to the future.

I tried yesterday to make that position quite plain in my remarks, which now appear in *Hansard*. I then repeated what, in part, I had previously said in this house on those matters. I now give to my hon. friend as reply to the question which he has asked what I said yesterday, which appears in *Hansard* at page 44, restating what I said in this house on November 12 last:

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.

And the further quotation also from what I said on November 12 last which appears on page 48 of yesterday's *Hansard*:

But so far as conscription for service overseas is concerned in the armed forces of Canada, that question was submitted to the people of Canada at the last general election, an election which was held in war time, and in which the leaders of all political parties made their statements to the electorate, and the people of Canada decided against conscription for overseas service. So far as I am concerned, without any consultation of the people on that subject, I do not intend to take the responsibility of supporting any policy of conscription for service overseas.

That is my position—as stated, I might say, repeatedly in this house, but certainly most clearly and emphatically on November 12 last and again yesterday in this house.

Replying further to my hon. friend's question as to what I intend to do as a result of the plebiscite, I thought I had also anticipated the answer to that question in my remarks yesterday afternoon, which will be found on page 32 of yesterday's *Hansard*, when I said: