

staked the life and existence of his ministry on that undertaking. That was responsible government under the British system, and under the British practice which we follow here; that is the principle which this government should invoke.

Did Mr. Roosevelt have a mandate to put into operation the compulsory principle when he started his training plan before the United States went into war? Most assuredly he did not.

This government should have a policy either for or against complete national service in an all-out effort for total war, and by that policy it should stand. That is the leadership which the nation is looking for. And what are we getting? A plebiscite. A plebiscite on what? Not on a concrete proposal for total war—nothing of the sort; a plebiscite seeking a release from an obligation arising out of a commitment made by the Prime Minister, unasked for, and long anterior to the happening of the tragic events with which this nation and the world are at present confronted.

Again, could anything be more fantastic, more humiliating to a self-respecting people? The Prime Minister asks to be relieved from a pledge, made voluntarily, without any mandate. And yet his government has placed on the statute books, in the Dominion Elections Act, a prohibition against any candidate for parliament signing any pledge to his constituents. Why is that prohibition there? Because the government of the day, the government and parliament, decided as a matter of principle that such a thing was improper and should not be done. Yet we have this spectacle before us to-day.

I have a proposal to make to the Prime Minister. If the Prime Minister feels bound by his self-imposed vow; if his conscience bothers him and he now wishes to be relieved of that vow; if he desires, in the light of reason and world events, to change his position and pursue a total war effort by all means open to him as the leader of the state; if he wishes, in the light of the situation now confronting him and this nation and this war-torn world, to give a new lead to the nation, there is a well-defined and well-established constitutional position and practice open to him. That is to say, he may come to this house and say to us that, "notwithstanding my self-imposed vow, for which I had no mandate, I now find that, in the circumstances which confront this nation as a result of this gravest moment of world crisis, another course must be followed, another and more vigorous policy must be pursued." It is his duty and his privilege to come to parliament in this way, to state his new policy, and to ask for the endorsement of

the people's elected representatives. That is the British way of responsible government. That is the Canadian system of responsible government. That is the course the Prime Minister should pursue under the pressure of to-day's situation.

Is there anyone so bold as to say that is not the right and proper course? Who is there in this house who will say that that course should not be pursued or cannot be pursued? I venture to say that he would get the consent of the house almost unanimously.

Why have the people delegated to us, their elected representatives, the power to speak for them, and what are our obligations? Surely we have some obligations in the premises. Let those who seek to answer peruse once more the classic declaration of Edmund Burke to the electors of Bristol in 1774. The words he uttered then are in principle as true to-day as they were 170 years ago. In order to refresh the memory of all of us I propose to read a major portion of that address:

Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

My worthy colleague says his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and, what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion, in which one set of men deliberate and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear, and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But authoritative instructions; mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience, these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and