

tlement of land in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, was hanged, and the status of the French language went into a steady decline. In 1889 Manitoba disbanded the French schools and in 1913 Ontario adopted Regulation 17 of the Department of Education, forbidding primary school instruction in French. (This regulation has since been repealed.)

There were other signs of diminishing French status. Anglophones controlled the major industries and businesses of Quebec. In the 1940s Premier Maurice Duplessis' Union Nationale party was strongly nationalistic though it accepted the economic *status quo*. After his death in 1959, Jean Lesage and the Liberal Party of Quebec launched *la révolution tranquille*, the Quiet Revolution, a cultural and social renaissance which engendered a sweeping reorganization of education and a separation of church and state and fostered a new economic nationalism.

In 1963 the Federal Government's Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, co-chaired by André Laurendeau, editor of the newspaper *Le Devoir*, and Davidson Dunton, president of Carleton University, provided the logic for the Official Languages Act of 1969 which gave equal



Maurice Duplessis



Davidson Dunton



André Laurendeau

Another Time, Another Question

During the first World War Canada was divided on the question of conscription. Prime Minister Robert Borden, a Conservative, instituted a draft in 1917. Most French Canadians were opposed and the act had historical consequences. Quebecers were estranged, and it would be forty years before they would give a majority vote to the Conservative Party.

In World War II the Liberal leader William Lyon Mackenzie King promised there would be no draft, but as the war went on he came under pressure. In 1942, after much reflection, he put the question to the public in the form of a plebiscite question that carefully avoided the word *conscription*:

"Are you in favour of releasing the government from any obligation arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service?"

The vote countrywide was "Yes," 2,946,000 to 1,643,000, but Quebec voted "No," 994,000 to 376,000. Parliament passed a draft act with the catch-phrase, "conscription if necessary, but not necessarily conscription," easing it through. King delayed the draft as long as he could and when he implemented it in 1944 he avoided sending conscripts overseas. The war ended without a further crisis and his government was re-elected.



Prime Minister Mackenzie King votes in the 1942 plebiscite.



Montrealers protest World War I conscription.