

Mr. COLDWELL: I should not like it to be thought that the leader of the opposition speaks for the entire opposition. I recognize at once that we must get every bit of information that will guide us. I recognize that there are matters which may be of military importance not only to ourselves but to those allied with us and under those circumstances we would be disposed to receive that information in secret session, with the right of course to question that information. I should like you, Mr. Speaker, and the house to understand that we do not associate ourselves with the leader of the opposition in that respect. We think, too, it is proper under the circumstances to have General McNaughton appear here in spite of the fact that it might be unprecedented.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 4.30 p.m.

Thursday, November 23, 1944

The house met at three o'clock.

THE MINISTRY.

ORDERS IN COUNCIL RESPECTING CHANGES AND APPOINTMENTS

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I desire to table certain orders in council respecting changes and appointments in the personnel of the cabinet: P.C. 7999, concerning the appointment of Mr. Mackenzie (Vancouver Centre) as Minister of Veterans Affairs; P.C. 7991, concerning the appointment of Mr. Howe as Minister of Reconstruction, and P.C. 8003, concerning the appointment of Mr. Claxton as Minister of National Health and Welfare. These appointments and changes have been made since the house adjourned in August last.

CANADIAN FORCES

PETITIONS WITH RESPECT TO APPLICATION OF N.R.M.A. ACT

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (Parkdale): I desire to present a petition to this House of Commons from my constituency of Parkdale:

The undersigned citizens of the Dominion of Canada—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. Did I understand the hon. gentleman to say that the petition was presented to him?

Mr. BRUCE: No, Mr. Speaker; this is a petition to parliament, signed by 139 men and women of my constituency.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it addressed to the houses of parliament?

Mr. BRUCE: It is addressed to the houses of parliament. I think it is perfectly in order.

That whereas the Prime Minister of Canada has pledged on behalf of his government to the House of Commons that if "circumstances should arise which would render the use of compulsion imperative, such for example as the maintenance of the necessary reinforcements for Canada's army overseas", the compulsory provisions of Bill 80 would become effective by order in council;

And whereas such circumstances have arisen; And whereas your humble petitioners are of the belief that a grave emergency—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. member may read the prayer of the petition, but not the whole petition.

Mr. BRUCE:

It is, therefore, the earnest prayer of your humble petitioners that this force shall be at once dispatched overseas to the aid of our men now fighting at the front;

And it is their further prayer that, since speedy victory can be gained at least cost of life only by a steady and adequate flow of reinforcements, and without such reinforcements lives must be needlessly lost, the policy of total conscription of man-power for overseas service to ensure support to our fighting forces now, and until victory is won, be made effective forthwith as provided by Bill 80, and approved by the great majority of the people of Canada recording their vote in the plebiscite of 1942.

Mr. MCGREGOR: I desire to lay on the table a petition of a similar nature.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: I desire to lay on the table two petitions of a similar nature.

INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (Parkdale): In view of the disagreement between the Prime Minister and the former Minister of National Defence about the meaning of the phrase "conscription if necessary," will the Prime Minister tell the house now precisely what he means by this phrase which he used in his 1942 speeches?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question must be placed on the order paper.

CANADIAN FORCES

TABLING OF ORDER IN COUNCIL RESPECTING EXTENSION OF SERVICE OF N.R.M.A. PERSONNEL

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I understand that by agreement yesterday the house wishes to hear General McNaughton, the Minister of National Defence, and that he will be allowed