

say at that time that he would take the boys off the farm even if there was no one left to feed the cattle. I have not heard any of these moral obligations brought up but I have heard minister after minister say that Canada's first line of defence was overseas.

Mr. CRERAR: If my hon. friend will pardon me, I submit that he is very distinctly out of order. What we are discussing is the form of the ballot and the question that should be asked. What my hon. friend is talking about is the general principle of the whole measure, which was decided upon when it received second reading.

Mr. ROWE: Again I thank the minister for correcting me. I think the Prime Minister also was far afield in many of his statements this afternoon. Some latitude has been given, but I shall endeavour to stick closely to the issue for the few moments I am going to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: We are discussing section 3. I understand that agreement was reached by which on the short title there should be general discussion. That has taken place and now we are on clause 3. Under standing order 58 we must stick to the section of the bill which is before the committee.

Mr. ROWE: I thought in view of the amendment we might have some latitude. However, section 3 deals with the question to be asked:

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?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): And the amendment makes it wide open.

Mr. ROWE: Even section 3 I believe gives latitude for anything I might offer at this time. All we are trying to do is to help the government by clarifying the question. But there is no assurance, especially when they are so divided themselves on this issue, when some of their followers are the only hon. members who are going to work vigorously against the plebiscite, that it is going to carry. The people of the country should be told what is going to happen. Rather than submit to the people at this time a question worded as this is, the Prime Minister would have been much better advised to carry on without the plebiscite, whether he had compulsory service or not.

So far as moral obligation is concerned, again I refer to these men who are taken and conscripted. True, conscription was not an issue in the last election. Both sides stated there would be no conscription. But much has happened since 1940 and even since this

session began. Time after time since the beginning of the session this empire has surrendered ground. We have seen the darkest days in the history of the British empire. We see still darker days threatening, and now we are asked to say to the Prime Minister: We will release you from any past commitments with reference to military service. Can anyone tell me that compulsory military service is not here if there should be an invasion? Have we not conscription for home defence? I am not one of those who says it is not just as much the duty of the farmers' sons as any other class to take part in this war, and our farmers know that. But I have received letters, as I presume every hon. member has, with regard to the position of farmers. I received one to-day with regard to a farmer who was on his back—

The CHAIRMAN: Order. The hon. gentleman must know that the question of exempting farmers' sons from military service is clearly outside the scope of section 3. Section 3 does not involve the principle of the measure, but only the form of the question to be put to the voters. Therefore hon. members should limit their remarks to the form of the question to be put in the taking of the plebiscite.

Mr. ROWE: But I notice that the amendment says:

Are you in favour of the conscription of the financial institutions of Canada so that the government can fulfil its commitment to issue currency and credit in terms of public need?

The CHAIRMAN: We are not on that. Amendments must be considered *seriatim*. The only amendment now before the committee is to add at the end of the question which appears in the printed ballot the words "in any theatre of war". The other amendment is not up for consideration now.

Mr. ROWE: Then I shall still not delay the committee any longer than I can help. But I wish to point out that every hon. member when he goes to explain this section to the people will be confronted, as I have been when I have asked people to vote, by the question: What does it mean? It is the first time I have ever been asked to vote when I do not know what "yes" will mean or what "no" will bring forth. If when the answer is given by the greatest jury of all, the people of this country, they say yes, heaven only knows what they may get. If they say no, nobody knows the situation; our boys will be left overseas without reinforcements except to the extent that men are available through the voluntary system. If there is need for compulsory service for home defence to get men to fight for their own country, and we