

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

SPEECH

BY

Rt. Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING, M. P.

PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

ON

OVERSEAS SERVICE IN THE CANADIAN ARMY

AMENDMENT OF THE NATIONAL RESOURCES MOBILIZATION ACT

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 1942*

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMENDMENT
RESPECTING OVERSEAS SERVICE**

On Monday, May 11, I moved for leave to introduce the bill which is now before the house. Leave being granted, it was introduced and read the first time. As then explained, the bill seeks to amend the National Resources Mobilization Act, which was assented to on the 21st of June, 1940. There is but one amendment of significance. It is to repeal section 3 of the Act. Such further amendments as are sought are consequential upon the striking out of section 3. They do not go beyond deleting from section 2 of the Act, the words "subject to the provisions of section 3 hereof" in the first line of the section as it stands at present, and the renumbering of the sections affected.

Section 2 of the National Resources Mobilization Act reads as follows:

2. Subject to the provisions of section three hereof, the governor in council may do and authorize such acts and things, and make from time to time such orders and regulations, requiring persons to place themselves, their services and their property at the disposal of His Majesty in the right of Canada, as may be deemed necessary or expedient for securing the public safety, the defence of Canada, the main-

tenance of public order, or the efficient prosecution of the war, or for maintaining supplies or services essential to the life of the community.

Section 3 of the Act reads:

3. The powers conferred by the next preceding section may not be exercised for the purpose of requiring persons to serve in the military, naval or air forces outside of Canada and the territorial waters thereof.

The meaning of the existing law

Let me immediately direct the attention of hon. members to the wording and exact meaning of these two clauses. They give expression to the law as it is at the present time. They help to make clear the precise effect of the proposed amendment.

By section 2, special powers are conferred upon the governor in council. By another section of the act, the powers conferred are to remain in force only during the continuance of the present war. There can be no doubt whatever as to what these powers are. The governor in council possesses and has possessed ever since June 21, 1940, power to require

*The divisions and headings of the text have been inserted for the convenience of readers, and for purposes of ready reference. They do not appear in the official report.