

I wonder also whether the Prime Minister would suggest that his moral obligation is greater than that of his friend, Mr. Roosevelt. This is what Mr. Roosevelt said during the 1940 election campaign to the people of the United States—giving them quite as definite a pledge as was made by the Prime Minister of Canada:

While I am talking to you fathers and mothers, I will say it again and again and again, your boys are not going to be sent to fight in foreign wars.

This pledge was not only made by Mr. Roosevelt but supported by every member of congress. After the treacherous attack of Japan Mr. Roosevelt and congress had no hesitation in breaking the election pledge and legislating to send American boys to every part of the globe.

I should like to submit this question to the Prime Minister: Will he and his government put forth the same effort to ensure a favourable vote on the plebiscite as they did to ensure the success of the victory loan?

May I add just a word as to my own position in respect of this plebiscite. While I think it is very improper to shift to the electorate the responsibility which belongs to parliament, I shall vote yes on the plebiscite, and do my utmost to secure as many votes in the affirmative as I can, my reason being that it will relieve the government from what it considers to be a commitment; and because I greatly fear what will result if this plebiscite is defeated, as it very well may be.

Mr. POULIOT: Mr. Chairman, just one word. I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Parkdale upon the statement he has just made about the possibility of the invasion of Canada. It shows the necessity of doing all we can for the defence of this country.

I have been a supporter of the government for seventeen years, and I am still a supporter of the government. On the other hand I find it pretty hard to give them a blank cheque by releasing them from all pledges which may have been made to the Canadian people. Not only was there a pledge regarding compulsory military service overseas, but there was also a pledge that there would be no amalgamation of railways.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The question is on section 3, which determines the form of the question to be put to the voters. The remarks of the hon. gentleman are irrelevant.

Mr. POULIOT: Well, Mr. Chairman, I am not going to argue my case, and I will point out to you only one thing. The obligation is not specified; the word "obligation" is preceded by the word "any", which means that to

answer yes to the question implies that in the opinion of the voter the government is released from any pledge which has been made to the people.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The wording of the question is, "obligation arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service".

Mr. POULIOT: Well, I will not insist upon it. But there is another point: to whom has this pledge been made? In the first place it was made to those who were in favour of the neutrality of Canada. When Canada entered into war some Canadians were opposed to that and favoured the neutrality of Canada, and a certain pledge was then made to them, that there would be no compulsory military service. Afterwards, when conscription for home defence was established, there was a second pledge given to those who were against conscription of any kind. Then at the last election the pledge was made; it was made in the house and also by leading politicians when they travelled throughout the country. Now, suppose that in a constituency forty per cent of the people were against conscription and sixty per cent were for conscription. The pledge was not made to those who were for conscription; it was made to those who were against conscription. It is therefore up to the latter to release the government from any obligation incurred thereby. Take a constituency in which the proportion is forty per cent against conscription and sixty per cent for conscription. For one reason or another some of the sixty per cent may have supported the government candidate notwithstanding the question of conscription for overseas service. They supported him because he was a personal friend or had obliged them, or for some other reason which did not enter into consideration of the pledge. Is it fair to take the majority of any constituency, even the vote of those who were not interested in the pledge, to release the government from all responsibility in the matter. Of course, it is the majority that rules, but in some constituencies the majority were against conscription. It may have happened in the constituencies of hon. gentlemen—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is discussing the principle of the bill. His remarks are not directed to the form of question to be put. Section 3 of the bill is exclusively concerned with the form of question.

Mr. POULIOT: Yes, sir, but I am not discussing the principle of the bill, but the pledge.

The CHAIRMAN: Even that is not now before the chair. The matter before the chair is only the form of question to be put to the voter, and of course there is the amendment.