

Let me get back to the main thread of my speech. When the plebiscite of 1942 was put over on this country what did the Liberal party do? Did they simply leave it with the people to vote "yes" or "no"? They did not. They went throughout the country urging everyone to vote "yes." They went throughout the country urging everyone to place upon them the responsibility of conscription for overseas when that time became necessary. They did that. They invited responsibility. The question is, why were they so anxious to get a "yes" vote in 1942 when they were not prepared to implement the "yes" vote as long after as November 22, 1944? Another question: the right hon. the Prime Minister of this country cries out, "Anarchy, anarchy, anarchy!" Did he not know that there might be a possibility of such a thing when he was calling on the people of 1942 to vote "yes" for the conscription of men for overseas service? Why cry "anarchy" now? A couple of years or so too late, I fancy.

Parliament was summoned in consequence thereof and the government brought down their national resources mobilization bill. That was supposed to implement the plebiscite vote. I refer to bill No. 80. That was simply another attempt to lead the people to believe that the Liberal party were about to do something.

I want the house to note a most significant thing. When bill No. 80 was brought down in 1942 the Prime Minister said, "I am not going to put this bill into effect until I get a vote of confidence from this parliament." I maintain that that promise has been broken, and I will tell hon. members how. When parliament was summoned a week or two ago it was summoned for the purpose of voting confidence in the Prime Minister's voluntary system. He was calling parliament to seek endorsement of his position as against the position taken by the former minister of national defence (Mr. Ralston). That was what it was all about.

The funny thing about it is that the right hon. gentleman recognized that he would have difficulty in getting the confidence of his own party in his voluntary system. Before asking parliament for a vote of confidence to give effect to bill No. 80 as he said he would, he passes an order in council while parliament is sitting right under his nose. I ask: why this strange procedure? The only answer I can find is that it was a political expedient to keep his party and cabinet together.

Now a word with respect to the resignation of the former minister of national defence. When the Minister of National Defence re-

ported conditions overseas to the government why did not the Prime Minister tell the country the truth about the situation? Why did he not go on the air, for instance? Spot announcements could have been made that the Prime Minister of Canada wanted to talk to the nation on a particular night, or something of that kind. I would not have objected to a little build-up for the Prime Minister on an occasion of that kind. Why did he not say to the country, now, fellow Canadians, my minister has brought back a report from the fighting fronts that the situation there is so-and-so and so-and-so; he informs me this and that; now, fellow Canadians, on the basis of what my minister has told me I am afraid I shall have to call parliament together in order to get their confidence, for the time has now come to put bill No. 80 into effect.

If the Prime Minister had done that, not only would he have been able to gather unto himself not only the confidence of the people of Canada, he would have had their admiration as well. What did he do instead? When the thing began to boil, when the former minister of national defence was out of office, the people began to weigh the situation and ask, What is all this about? The Prime Minister then went on the air, taking the attitude that he must play safe with his party. He went on the air and attempted to justify his position as against that of the former minister of national defence.

The Prime Minister may argue against that if he wishes, and as I think he tried to do the other day when the question of the circularizing of his speech by the war information board was before the house. We were told that this was an attempt to get Canada to stand behind him when he was calling for volunteers. I should like to read one or two statements the Prime Minister made when talking over the air. The first was:

I now come to the question: Is there an adequate reserve of reinforcements for the army? In the opinion of the military authorities, no difficulty is likely to arise except in relation to reinforcements for the infantry. Infantry reinforcements have been adequate to meet requirements to date. But, during his recent visit to the army overseas, Colonel Ralston learned that to provide replacements for future casualties at present rate, the flow of infantry reinforcements from Canada should be accelerated. One fact needs to be emphasized. There is not an overall shortage of potential reinforcements. Many thousands of men are in training now and enlistments are continuing at an encouraging rate. Because we cannot tell how long the war may last, we must, as long as a possible need may arise, continue to recruit men for the army to keep up the supply of reinforcements. But recent recruits and those who enlist from now on will not be available until they are trained.