

Then came the 1940 election, when I was returned to office simply because I had faithfully interpreted the opinions of my constituents. I shall not relate in all its details the struggle I had to wage against those who did not share my views.

During this campaign, all the members of the present parliament pledged themselves to oppose conscription for overseas service. However, after its entry into the European conflict, on September 10, 1939, our government supported our war effort to the limit of our financial resources.

On June 21, 1940, the house passed the National Resources Mobilization Act, for the defence of Canada and of Canada only. I then supported that act which, for once, clearly stated our true military obligations. No Canadian worthy of that name could oppose the mobilization of our national resources for the sole defence of our country.

Step by step and from one concession to another we have now reached the brink of the abyss that was foreseen in 1937, because, whether we like it or not, this measure undoubtedly incorporates into our statute books the principle of conscription for overseas service. I am not the only one to entertain that belief, as evidenced by an excerpt I shall quote from the *Winnipeg Free Press* of June 1, 1942. Referring to the debate on this bill, that paper made the following statement:

Once that debate is closed and the bill is passed, conscription shall have been definitely settled, the time when it should be applied remaining, of course, to be determined in the light of the requirements of the general military situation.

Such an opinion should be pondered, considering the source from which the *Free Press* obtains its information.

Under the pretext that our sacrosanct national unity is at stake, it will be asserted, to-morrow as to-day, that we are waging Canada's war for Canada, for the defence of all the liberties and all the rights of the Canadian people. In the light of recent happenings, that argument has an ironic angle. I wonder if there is really such a thing as a Canadian people. Can any one conceive a people without a flag, without a national anthem, and without any true understanding among its various elements? A Canada without a truly Canadian policy on all matters is not the kind of country which our forefathers had visualized.

Is it fitting that, for the maintenance of such a primitive colonialism, Canada should be called upon, every 20 or 25 years, to sacrifice through conscription the lives of

her young men on distant theatres of war? My answer is no, not any more to-day than yesterday shall I vote for such a measure.

Were I to be asked to vote for the conscription of wealth in order to help our allies, I would gladly do so, for such would be the best means, as I see it, to put an end to all those wars which throw the world into confusion for the benefit of a few shady financiers.

What need have we of conscripting men when England is asking us for tools?

What need have we of this legislation to intensify our war effort when Mr. Churchill himself states that our effort has been more than splendid?

What need have we of conscription when the voluntary system meets the wishes of the government even beyond their expectations?

Have we so soon forgotten the telling words uttered by one of our most eminent governors, Lord Tweedsmuir, when he said:

A Canadian's first loyalty is not to the British Commonwealth of Nations but to Canada, and those who deny this are doing, to my mind, a great disservice to the commonwealth.

With this thought I shall conclude. Whenever this legislation is adopted it shall be put into effect by order in council. Parliament shall have nothing further to do, nothing to say in the matter. Mr. King shall be at the mercy of the conscriptionist members of his government.

I entreat each and every one of my hon. colleagues in this house to join, while there is still time, in rescuing our leader from this evil predicament by a concerted vote against the present bill.

On motion of Mr. Gardiner the debate was adjourned.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

A message was delivered by Major A. R. Thompson, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, His Honour, the deputy of His Excellency the Governor General, desires the immediate attendance of this honourable house in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the house went up to the Senate.

And having returned.

Mr. SPEAKER informed the house that the deputy of His Excellency the Governor General had been pleased to give in His Majesty's name the royal assent to the following bills:

An act to amend the Canada Evidence Act.

An act to authorize the raising, by way of loan, of certain sums of money for the public service.