

electors. Some of you want to vote on this bill according to the vote that was given in your constituency on the plebiscite. You want to respect that vote; you want to say, "I am going to obey the will of these people and vote according to their wishes". Why would you deny me the same privilege of respecting the will of the population of my province after I have done all I could to have them see the question otherwise? I want to keep my word to these people. Despite what Burke has said, the only democratic system that is worthy of the name is the one that is based on respect for the will of the people. Burke never faced elections as we have them. If my memory serves me right, he was elected by one man instead of being elected by the majority of the citizens of his division.

But I have a still better authority. When the leader of the opposition asked the government to take the responsibility of proceeding without a plebiscite he was answered by the Prime Minister that we ought to respect the will of the people, that we have no mandate except the mandate that we received from the people who elected us to this House of Commons. That was the answer of the Prime Minister, and it is in black and white in the report of the speech which he delivered on February 25. The plebiscite was an absolute contradiction of the Prime Minister's new theory, because the plebiscite was an appeal to the people in order to know their views before any action was taken. It was not a case of the government and parliament acting according to their own best judgment. It was a case of our going to the people from whom we derive our power, and asking them what their wish was.

I believe that respect for one's word is more important in this parliament and is more helpful to the maintenance of democracy in Canada and to the world than the theory which was expounded by that great writer and historian, Burke. I want to respect not only my own word but the will of the people of the province of Quebec, and also the voice of the French Canadians of other sections of Canada. This bill is a flagrant contradiction to all that we have said both in parliament and outside of parliament on the plebiscite, and I maintain that the words "a new policy" I used in my letter of resignation, have been amply justified by what it is now proposed in contradiction to what we said in asking the people of Canada to answer "yes" on the plebiscite.

Once again I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence. I know it is based more particularly upon the fact that my English may not be as good as it should be.

Nevertheless I shall never forget your kindness and the generous and friendly reception which has been accorded to me this afternoon even by the members who do not share my views on this most important question.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we resume at 8.30 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the consent of the house.

At 6.20 p.m. the house took recess.

### After Recess

The house resumed at 8.30 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: During the dinner hour I have been considering the amendment moved by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell), and I should like to express to the house my appreciation of the observations of hon. members. The amendment reads:

This bill be not now read a second time but that it be resolved that provision for the introduction of conscription of man-power for overseas service, without specific proposals for the immediate use of the power conferred by section 2 of the act, to conscript war industry, financial institutions and accumulated wealth, does not meet the urgent need for total war, imposes further inequality of sacrifice and is, therefore, contrary to the peace, order and good government of Canada.

In support of the amendment the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart referred to an amendment of Sir Wilfrid Laurier which is set out on page 321 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms. I think the hon. member will agree that that amendment is not parallel to the amendment which is now proposed. It was such an amendment as could not be moved in committee. It did not propose to amend; it sought to defeat the bill. This amendment in its terms does not so intend.

The hon. member also quoted from page 217, citation 755 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms. I will read the citation:

It is also competent to a member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a bill, to move as an amendment to the question, a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the bill, or expressing opinions as to any circumstances connected with its introduction, or prosecution; or otherwise opposed to its progress; or seeking further information in relation to the bill by committees, commissioners, the production of papers or other evidence or the opinion of judges.