

*War Effort—Government Policy*

First of all, as to pledges. It is true that before the present war, recalling the results of the introduction of conscription in the last war, and more particularly the methods employed to secure its introduction and its enforcement, I, like others of my party, and many of all parties in Canada, took the position that, if Canada were to participate in another European war I would not support but would oppose conscription for service overseas.

After the outbreak of war, in the general elections of 1940, I, along with the leaders, and most of the members, of all parties, with the possible exception of the Social Credit party, took the position that conscription for service overseas should not be resorted to. That was at a time when it was generally believed that the war would be primarily a European war.

I wish to emphasize the point that when I gave the undertaking I did, it was given to the country as a whole, and not to any province or section of the country.

Time went by, and one country after another in Europe was invaded and overrun by the armed forces of nazi Germany. Italy, on June 10, 1940, and Japan on December 7, 1941, just three years ago today, joined the nazi aggressors in an all-out effort to dominate the world. It became increasingly apparent that the pledges given not to resort to conscription for service overseas might, at some time, prevent the government of our country from taking a step which might become necessary to maintain our fighting forces in the field, and which would be necessary to enable them to do their part in the preservation of our freedom, bound up as it is with the freedom of all the allied nations.

In anticipation of such a possibility, a plebiscite was held on April 27, 1942. As a result of the plebiscite the Canadian people as a whole, to whom the pledges had been made, released the government and all parties in this house from all pledges respecting conscription, and gave to all complete freedom, from that time forward, to take in this war whatever course in their judgment was necessary and advisable in support of the cause for which our armies are fighting.

Bill 80 was subsequently introduced and the National Resources Mobilization Act amended in 1942 so as to permit, if necessary, the use of conscription for service overseas. The issue of conscription for overseas service was settled, once Bill 80 became law.

As head of the administration, I undertook, at that time, that the power conferred by Bill 80 would not be used unless it became necessary. I also undertook that it would be used if that became necessary and advisable. That

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

pledge I gave to this House of Commons. It was no less a pledge to the people of Canada as a whole. Above all, it was a pledge to our army overseas that it would not lack support in its fight, in association with the forces of the allied nations, to preserve Christian civilization and human freedom.

That was two and a half years ago. Canada is fortunate indeed that the need has not arisen until this late date in the war. The need having arisen, by ensuring against any possible lack of reinforcements, I feel that to-day I am keeping faith with this House of Commons, with the people of Canada, and with the fighting men in Canada's army overseas.

The house divided on the motion (Mr. Mackenzie King) as amended, which was agreed to on the following division:

## YEAS

## Messrs:

Abbott	Healy
Bertrand (Laurier)	Henderson
Black (Chateauguay- (Huntingdon)	Hill
Blackmore	Hlynka
Blair	Hoblitzell
Bradette	Howden
Breithaupt	Howe
Bryce	Hurtubise
Burton	Ilsley
Casselman, Mrs.	Isnor
(Edmonton East)	Jean
Chevrier	Johnston (Bow River)
Clark	Johnston (London)
Claxton	King, Mackenzie
Cleaver	Kinley
Coldwell	Kirk
Corman	Knowles
Coté	Kuhl
Crerar	LaFlèche
Cruikshank	Lapointe (Matapedia- Matane)
Dechene	Leduc
Donnelly	Leger
Douglas	Little
Dupuis	McCann
Edwards	McCuaig
Emmerson	McCubbin
Factor	McCulloch
Fair	MacDiarmid
Farquhar	Macdonald
Fauteux	(Brantford City)
Ferland	Macdonald (Halifax)
Fournier (Hull)	Macdonald
Fraser (Northumber- land, Ont.)	(Kingston City)
Fulford	McGarry
Furniss	McGeer
Gardiner	McGibbon
Gershaw	McIlraith
Gibson	McIvor
Gillis	MacKenzie
Gladstone	(Lambton-Kent)
Golding	MacKenzie (Neepawa)
Goulet	Mackenzie
Graham	(Vancouver Centre)
Grant	MacKinnon
Gray	(Edmonton West)
Gregory	McLarty
Hanson (Skeena)	McLean (Cape Breton North-Victoria)
Harris (Grey-Bruce)	McLean (Simcoe East)