

will again rear its ugly head. Speaking for myself alone, I do not ask to be relieved from the responsibilities that go with responsible government. I was elected to do my duty, as I saw it, to my country. If I fail to do so, then under our democratic system the remedy is at the polls.

Much has been and will be said of broken pledges. The hon. member for Brantford City, in seconding the address on Friday last, remarked that under our democratic system the promise of a leader was as binding as any bond under seal. Does the hon. member forget that in the mother of all parliaments, Westminster, on April 27, 1939, while the nation was still at peace, and only four weeks after the then Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, had renewed a pledge made by his predecessor, Mr. Baldwin, that compulsory military service would not be adopted, Mr. Chamberlain introduced a motion in these words:

This house approves the proposal of his majesty's government to introduce as soon as possible a system of compulsory military training, as announced on the 26th of April.

In the debate which followed the introduction of that motion, the prevailing opinion was the same as it should be here in Canada: The facts are there and we must face them as they exist to-day. Let me suggest to the Prime Minister that whatever his declaration may have been, as our first minister in this hour of peril he is bound to act in accordance with what he believes is required for the national safety. That is the supreme pledge which he made, though perhaps not in words, when he assumed the high office which he now holds. What of the solemn pledge given by President Roosevelt during his last election campaign, to the effect that the forces of the United States would not be sent overseas? Within one month of the declaration of war we find the president telling congress and the nation:

We cannot wage this war in a defensive spirit. As our power and our resources are fully mobilized, we shall carry the attack against the enemy. American land, air and sea forces will take stations in the British isles—

Has there been any outcry in the United States of America against broken pledges?

There is another powerful weapon being used in this war, one of which we must not lose sight. That is the weapon of propaganda. Can anyone here doubt that the position Canada is taking to-day will be distorted far beyond its real significance? Can anyone doubt that the very real accomplishments of Canada, to which I have already referred, will be ignored in an attempt to show that in taking this plebiscite there is uncertainty and lack of sincerity when we

say that total war can be met only with total effort? It does not matter what our enemies think. What does matter is the interpretation that will be placed on this action by our allies. I need refer to only one of them. On the very day that the government announced this plebiscite, the Commonwealth of Australia, through Prime Minister Curtin, was calling the man-power and the woman-power of the nation to take battle stations. What will the Australian people think as they read the pages of Australian casualties in Libya and Singapore; what will they think as they hear the air raid sirens warning of impending Japanese attacks, and at the same time read that Canada is leisurely to take a plebiscite as to whether or not the government may be released from certain pledges given prior to the hour of national peril?

These, sir, are days when the situation changes very rapidly, indeed almost from hour to hour. It is not too late to take a different stand; and I urge the government to extend the provisions of the National Resources Mobilization Act in the manner I have indicated.

Whenever the subject of compulsory selective service is brought up, there are those who immediately take it that this has reference to compulsory service in man-power for the armed forces only. Of course that is only one phase of a compulsory selective system. In the broad sense it would include all of us. It would mean immediate re-registration and reclassification. It would train those best fitted for industrial work; it would release man-power, replacing it with woman-power, for our women are just as anxious to serve as are the men. It would put an immediate stop to the flow of labour from the farm into industry at high wages, a situation which is serious in many parts of Ontario and which will require immediate action if the farmer is to be enabled to maintain maximum production. If proper boards are set up, it should clarify the system of calling up the extended classes for training. At the present time the uncertainty with which these postponements are being granted has a detrimental effect on the production of our farms. This is so in spite of the excellent manner in which registrars—and I refer particularly to the registrar in western Ontario, who is handling a difficult job—are carrying on this work. We find that farmers, particularly those having one son in the age category, are in a state of absolute uncertainty. It is all very well to say that there can be postponement. I am sure nearly every hon. member has had farmers come to see him in the fall asking what they should do in regard to putting in