

The CHAIRMAN: The question as proposed to be amended would then read:

Are you in favour of releasing the government from any obligation arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service in any theatre of war?

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Mr. PERLEY: No matter what the form of the ballot may be, I can assure the committee that there will be as few spoiled ballots in the constituency of Qu'Appelle as anywhere else in the country. My opinion is that there should be nothing on the ballot but the question itself. There is no need to print the directions on how to vote because the directions will be posted in the polling booth itself. You should have just the question on the ballot paper, without any directions.

I do not believe there are any commitments of the government restricting the method of raising men. That part of the question is outside the issue and quite unnecessary. The restriction is not with respect to the method of raising men; it is as to where you send the men. So I think that should be deleted, to make it more comprehensible, and there should be added to it something as to where you send the men for military service. The question could be made more understandable by deleting that part of the fourth line, also by striking out any instructions as to how to vote; have just the one question, with "yes" or "no", and I think it would be very readily understood.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I feel sure that this ballot is going to be very confusing to a lot of people in my part of the country. The manner of voting in municipal elections as regards the ballots suggests a much simpler form, where you have one question appear, and you can vote "yes" or "no". I am receiving a great many letters from people in my own home riding, irrespective of political affiliation, wanting to know what it means if they vote "yes" and what it means if they vote "no". I have not yet been able to learn from the government what it means. I have taken the trouble to read previous speeches in this chamber by the Prime Minister and members of the government, and after doing so I am unable to see that a vote on this ballot will get us anywhere. I think the hon. member for Macleod made it very plain in his discussion on the resolution as to this plebiscite that this ballot would not release the government from its pledges given in this house some years ago. He presented a very strong argument, and

his suggested amendment does something to clarify to the public the meaning of the ballot. "In any theatre of war" makes it at least slightly more explicit. I think it could be improved even more. I suggest in all seriousness that only one question appear on the ballot paper, and I think that the words "in any theatre of war" should be added. The question would not then be so confusing to the general public.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The hon. member for Qu'Appelle has, I think, put his finger right on the fallacy of this question. In the mobilization act, in the admissions made by the Prime Minister in this house within a few days, the principle of compulsion is admitted. This government has power to raise men by any method, and it is raising them by all the methods which are now available—the voluntary system and the compulsory system. The only distinction is as to the disposition of the men raised by the government. In the one case, the men raised by compulsion may not be sent beyond the territorial limits of Canada, while men raised by voluntary methods may. So the question which is proposed to be put in this ballot is an untruthful one; it does not bear the essence of truth. There is not any restriction to-day on the method of raising men; it is the matter of the disposal of the men once they are raised; there is the fallacy of the whole thing. I put it to the Prime Minister, is there any restriction of the method of raising men in this country to-day? None whatever. The government can do anything it likes under the War Measures Act.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes. That is not the point.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I know what the Prime Minister has to say. I have the floor, for just a few moments.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend asked me a question.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No, I didn't—or I did with a rider attached. I make this assertion, that there is no restriction in law or in fact on the method by which this government may raise men for military service, and I defy a successful answer to the contrary to that question. The only trouble with the situation in Canada to-day is that the government has voluntarily tied itself by a commitment which it made to the public in the last election as to the disposition of the men raised by compulsion. We have the