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dare to do at the front door. On the one hand their followers, like the Premier of Quebec—I am not so sure about the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent); but at all events his political godfather the Premier of Quebec—told the people of Quebec in the recent by-elections that the Prime Minister of this country had always been against conscription and always would be and there would be no compulsory military service—

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): He did not say that.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —while the Sifton press that supports this government is assuring people in the west, to keep the boys in line, that if the plebiscite carries of course there will be compulsory military service. Heads I win, tails you lose; that is what this is.

On the question of the plebiscite itself, I was astonished to hear the Secretary of State say that the question to be asked would not be in the bill but would be a matter of proclamation. As to the time, it is of course obvious that you could not, if you want to hold this plebiscite within a reasonable time, fix a definite date, because nobody knows when the bill, if passed, will become law. But certainly the Prime Minister gave the categorical undertaking that a certain question would be put to the people of this country. Why should it be left to a proclamation which may be twiddled around by the government and we may not have that question put to the people? You might have something entirely different, or something which will have a shaded meaning, or something which will be different in principle, even from what was stated not only in the speech from the throne but by the Prime Minister himself.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say to my hon. friend that I made the statement very clearly as to what the question would be. If my hon. friend has any doubt about my word in the matter certainly I would have no objection, as I do not think any of my colleagues would, to the question being inserted in the bill. I rather gathered from what the minister has said that it was assumed no one would question the word of the Prime Minister on a specific statement which related to a measure of this kind, and that the insertion of the question in the bill would therefore be superfluous.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am glad to have the Prime Minister make that statement, because I want some certainty. When I hear the Secretary of State say that it will [Mr. Hanson (York-Sunbury).]

be the subject of proclamation, over which parliament will have no control but over which the government will have full control—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No, no.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —I may be pardoned if I appear a little suspicious that there is some change in plan, or that there may be some change. Of course the Prime Minister now has pledged his word that the question will not be altered—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Absolutely not.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —and that, if necessary the question will be put in the bill. So that we have learned something this afternoon.

Mr. CRERAR: You had that statement before.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): We had the statement, but that was all washed out when the Secretary of State said it would not be in the bill but would be in the proclamation.

Mr. McLARTY: But I stated that it would be identical with what the Prime Minister told this house.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I understood that the general scope of the question would be the same, but the Prime Minister categorically placed upon the records of this house the exact question that would be asked.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is the one that will be given to the people.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): All right; now we certainly have got something definite on that point. I am glad I raised the question, because it left me, at all events, somewhat up in the air, if I might use the expression, as to what we could expect. Of course I had not seen the prepared statement of the Secretary of State. Hon. gentlemen opposite knew exactly what he was going to say.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I had never heard a word of it until this afternoon.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I had to gather what I could as it went along. But I do not recall that the Secretary of State used the word "identical", or said that the question would be identical with what the Prime Minister had stated.

Mr. McLARTY: Just to clear that up, what I said was this: "The Prime Minister has already announced in this house the question that will be submitted to the people." I do not know that I used the word "identical";

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I assumed that the question he announced in the house was the one that was going to the people, and stated so.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not desire to get into any discussion, and I have never questioned the honour of the Prime Minister, as he knows. But I should just like to make this observation, that the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons cannot be read into a statute. I found that out in the course of some litigation; a statement made by Mr. Fielding, when he was Minister of Finance, did not receive much attention from the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada. One would like to remind courts of law what legislators had in mind when they passed legislation, in order to ascertain the meaning of that legislation; but the judges of this country, the judges of Britain and for aught I know the judges of the neighbouring republic, treat very cavalierly statements made by legislators during the passing of legislation. Certainly I had no intention of questioning the Prime Minister's bona fides. I am glad I raised the question, however, because it is now certain.

I do not want to say anything more on the question of the general principle. Apparently the government are adamant in their decision to proceed, adamant even though the enemy may be knocking at our door. That would seem to be a difficult thing to comprehend. We will hold a plebiscite to ascertain whether the Prime Minister is to be relieved from an election pledge, when Vancouver may be under assault by Japanese forces. Is that not

a ridiculous position in which to place the people of this country, and for the government of this country to be placed in, during war time? I do not think I shall say anything more about it, but as the opportunity offers, while now registering my disapproval of the whole procedure, I shall seek to analyse the detailed proposals as judicially as possible, with a view to improving them if that can be done.

It is now almost six o'clock, Mr. Speaker. I really do not think I can finish this afternoon; therefore I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. MACKENZIE KING moved the adjournment of the house.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): What will be the business on Monday?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We shall continue with the resolution that we have been discussing this afternoon, and, I hope, may be able to make some progress with the bill itself. I should think we ought to be prepared to take up other government notices of motion or government orders on the order paper.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): In what order, please?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: In the order in which they appear, I should think.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 5.58 p.m.

*to be taken to carry*

*connection with conscription  
(not in issue in law)  
in military decision  
in voting  
found from committee  
from  
W. King*