

*Plebiscite Act*

straight Conservative. I was never anything but a straight Conservative. I was never consulted by my late leader; I never saw him during the whole election campaign, and he did not bind me. The voluntary system is the best and only system, and we would have had a million men under it and rendered compulsion unnecessary. I never saw our former leader during the whole election of 1940.

The form of this ballot is limited by section 3, but you have to consider the background of the thing and the cause and effect it will have upon the average voter. When he comes to mark his ballot he will be confused. First we had the statement before the house met, and in the speech from the throne that it was all about conscription and nothing else. Then we had the statement by the Prime Minister last Thursday about adjacent territory. The voter will be confused because there is no clarity about it. So far as asking members of parliament to go out in their constituencies to advocate this ballot is concerned, I can say that I shall not advocate it or go out or have anything to do with it. I supported rearmament in 1936. I shall not give my constituents any advice as to how to vote. It is none of my business, duty or function. That is not the duty of a private member. That responsibility is upon the government of the day as long as they are the government of the day. It is none of my duty, business or function. It is their obligation to save this country, and look after the defence of the realm. There has never yet been a proper and adequate defence of the realm of this country, and the government is now trying to shift this off on to the private members and the electors by side-stepping their own responsibilities, duty and functions under the constitution of this country.

Mr. DUPUIS: I crave the indulgence of the committee to make a few remarks following what has been said by the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe) and the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Church). They seem to think that if the question proposed in section 3 is answered in the negative the Canadian nation will go out of the war. I obtained from the bureau of statistics certain returns obtained in the census. These show that there are about 1,200,000 single men between the ages of 18 and 45 years, and approximately 1,000,000 married men between the same ages, or a total of 2,200,000 men of military age. If we deduct the twenty per cent that would be medically unfit, we have left 1,800,000 men who would be fit for military service.

[Mr. Church.]

Hon. gentlemen know that these 1,800,000 men of military age would have to be placed into the three categories of national defence, war industries and the production of food-stuffs.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, but I must direct the attention of the hon. gentleman to the fact that we are dealing with section 3 which is concerned exclusively with the form of the question to be put to the voters.

Mr. DUPUIS: I am sure that you are right, but I ask the indulgence of the committee in order that I may answer hon. gentlemen opposite. I hope I shall be allowed to put on record the statistics I have. I shall not be long. As I say, these 1,800,000 men of military age must be divided into the three categories of national defence, war industry and agriculture. We thus have 600,000 for national defence. National defence must be divided into home service and overseas service; dividing 600,000 by two gives us 300,000 for overseas service. We already have compulsory service for home defence. The 300,000 men must again be divided into three branches: the army, the navy and the air force. I think in the long run we shall have an equal number of men in each branch of national defence. By dividing these 300,000 men into three, we have 100,000 for the army. It will be recalled that men who enlist in the navy or the air force are bound to go anywhere in the world. Compulsory service is limited to the army.

Suppose that the government on some future date should see, as the people may see themselves, that danger is getting nearer to our shores. I submit that at that time the people of Canada will be the first ones to ask the government to adopt any measure to protect this country and help our allies. We have only 100,000 men who would be available for compulsory enlistment in the army. Look at the results we have already. A total of 410,000 men have enlisted voluntarily to go anywhere in the world. I would tell the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe and the hon. member for Broadview that the empire will not be in danger if the people of this country should answer no to this question. The war will go on just the same. With compulsory service the results will be much less than they are now. That is the way I understand the question.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, but I cannot permit the hon. gentleman to continue.

Mr. DUPUIS: I am finished, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman has been too long already. The rules of the house