

*Plebiscite Act*

and honour of the Prime Minister with respect to a statement which he made in this house. My hon. friend said:

I have never questioned the honour of the Prime Minister, as he knows.

A little later he said:

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—

The question was the question of the plebiscite, the wording of the question and the insertion of the question in the bill. The government had met him on all these particulars, and then he said he was pleased that the whole matter was now certain, and that he never questioned the meaning I attached to the words. Yet last night, just because a few members of the Social Credit group wanted to have a chance to talk about finance in terms of public need, and to bring their particular hobby into this question, thereby confusing the issue still more, my hon. friend evidently thought the chance of making a little political capital was too good to miss, even in this time of war. Though this question of the plebiscite is a very important one, he evidently says to himself: "I cannot miss this chance; I will have to join with them."

Mr. GRAYDON: The right hon. gentleman is imputing motives to the leader of the opposition.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: He is telling the exact truth with regard to the situation. Let me read what the leader of the opposition said. I think I have been courteous in my treatment of the leader of the opposition. I have never said to him at one moment that I believed what he was saying, and the next moment that I did not believe it, that I thought he was putting a trick over on the people. In the matter of this plebiscite the value which the people of this country are to attach to the word of the Prime Minister is of some concern. I might not care a rap for anything the leader of the opposition might say about me in a personal way, but when it comes to a public issue of this magnitude it is important that the people should have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the administration in so all-important a question. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition was the one that asked, not that "a" question should be set out in the bill, but that the question which I had set out in the debate on the address should be the question to be put into the bill.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Right, but I never anywhere approved the principle of the question. I never did that.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is quite aside from the point. It is the question and the wording of it that we are discussing now. The whole discussion arose on the amendment of the hon. member for Macleod that we should add certain words to the question, and the leader of the opposition's point was that we should be so certain as to the question to be put to the people, that that particular question should be inserted in the bill. Let me read what he said on the question of the plebiscite. At page 755 of *Hansard* of February 20, 1942, he said:

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.

A little further on he said:

But certainly the Prime Minister gave the categorical undertaking that a certain question would be put to the people of this country.

A categorical undertaking that "a certain question"—that is the question which is now in the bill. It is the only question that has ever been before the house, and I did give, as my hon. friend says, a categorical declaration that that question would be the one that would be put into the bill. My hon. friend went on to say:

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—

He did not wish a shaded meaning in the question. He wanted my specific question to be inserted in the bill, and this in order to avoid any question that would have a shaded meaning. He went on:

—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.

He attached value to the importance of the wording because it was given by the Prime Minister. I immediately stated that we would have the question inserted in the bill. Then my hon. friend said:

I am glad to have the Prime Minister make that statement, because I want some certainty.

And this certainty was to get that particular question into the bill.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No, to get "a" question.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Not "a" question but "the" question, and I will prove it from my hon. friend's words. He said at page 755 of *Hansard*:

When I hear the Secretary of State say that it will be the subject of proclamation, over