

matter of providing for our territorial and coastal defence." But that is not what is happening. I have read, in the interval, the official report of the debates of the House of Commons of Monday, September 11, in the course of which the honourable Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Manion, put a very important question to the Minister of National Defence. The honourable Leader of the Opposition himself complained of the lack of information and especially of the ambiguity of the Government's halting replies. Having received certain representations from various citizens, Mr. Manion stated:

I have heard others, perhaps better informed, claim that when these men enlist, according to their attestation they can be sent overseas if the time should come when an expeditionary force should be sent.

The Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, Minister of National Defence, having given him a rather vague reply, the honourable Leader of the Opposition renewed his protest and said:

Perhaps I have been a little dense, but there is one point on which I am not quite clear. Do I understand the Minister to say that at the present time the men who are being enlisted and who have been for some time past are being enlisted under section 64?

Hon. Mr. Mackenzie replied:

Yes, that is correct.

And he added:

The terms of section 64 of the Militia Act are very explicit, in that these troops may be placed on active service either within or without Canada, for the defence of Canada. At the present time, sir, the troops called out are in three categories: In the first place, there are those who are defending the vulnerable points within Canada; in the second place, there are those who are defending our coastal areas on both coasts, and, in the third place, there is a mobile reserve for active service in the meantime within Canada. But if in the light of developments in the future the Government policy should be that of sending an expeditionary force overseas, that reserve force would be the nucleus of the force so to be sent.

Am I to understand, with my limited intelligence, that this means there is a possibility that the Government may, at a given moment, decide to send an expeditionary force overseas, and that the men are being enlisted under the provisions of section 64 of the Militia Act? Consequently, is such enlistment not obligatory? The Right Honourable the Minister of Justice and his French Canadian colleagues have dwelt with brilliant emphasis on their opposition to conscription. What does it all mean? That our fighting forces will be sent overseas under the provisions of the Militia Act and of the Navy Act? If such be the case, it would have been preferable to state it clearly and frankly.

Hon. Mr. SAUVÉ.

I deeply regret not having opposed, not only the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, but also the 100 million dollar appropriation. I was misled by the explanations of the Government and its organs.

Hon. GUSTAVE LACASSE (Text): Honourable senators, I should like to interject a little information here. As many honourable members of this House are probably aware, some two or three weeks ago, at the very commencement of enlistment throughout the country, the Minister of National Defence, in speaking over the radio, clearly and emphatically stated on his full responsibility as a Minister of the Crown that should the Government at any time decide to send an expeditionary force abroad the soldiers already enlisted would be free to sign a new engagement.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: Quite right.

Hon. Mr. LACASSE: That statement was made very specifically and emphatically over the radio. I give that information for what it is worth. It was my clear understanding then, as it is to-day, that no expeditionary force will be sent except one composed of regular forces and volunteers.

Hon. Mr. SAUVE: I asked the leader of the Government a question, and I want an answer.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I am ready to answer, but I thought there might be other questions put to me. When I speak I close the debate. I can answer my honourable friend, and will do so now.

(Translation)

Hon. Mr. SAUVÉ: I asked the honourable leader of the Government if a soldier enlisting now could be forced to serve?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: The answer is no.

Hon. Mr. SAUVÉ: Then, what is the meaning of the engagement being signed at the present time? I know men who have enlisted and who were under a different impression.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND (Text): If my honourable friend will allow me, I shall speak in English so that all honourable members of the Senate may understand my answer to the honourable gentleman.

Hon. Mr. SAUVE: Certainly.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Two Orders in Council were passed, one on August 26, 1939, and one on September 1, 1939, both of which were laid on the Table. That of August 26 reads: