

to the rights of Parliament, but also an undeserved reflection upon the people of this country, to whatever race or creed they belong.

The Government, notwithstanding its command of Parliament in the two Houses, has decided to submit to the people the question whether, if in the Government's opinion it becomes necessary to have compulsory military service for overseas, it may ask Parliament to legislate accordingly. In the light of the principles of parliamentary and responsible government, and in the light of national interest, the proposition seems to me quite indefensible and preposterous. But the Government and its defenders say that there is a reason, namely, that in the past the Government and the party it represents have made commitments not to make Canadian military service compulsory for overseas or on United States soil. As the honourable senator who has just preceded me (Hon. Mrs. Fallis) has asked: "Has the Government or the Liberal party, through its Ministers, not made many promises, and promises in connection with the war, which it has not kept? And has it been criticized severely, or criticized at all, for not having kept them?" In 1930 the Liberal party lost power. In 1935 it came back from exile, and it made promises then, as it made promises at by-elections later. Let me read you some of the commitments. Of course we must remember the background. In 1935 the Ethiopian crisis brought forward the question whether the imposition of sanctions would lead to war with Italy. Mr. King, cajoling for votes, decided he had to give some assurance against war, and he gave it in this way at a public meeting in Quebec.

Right Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: What is the date?

Hon. Mr. COTE: September 28, 1935; that was the day preceding the voting at Quebec. Mr. King said:

I say that Mr. Bennett has no right to commit Canada in any way, directly or indirectly, or to take any action whatever as regards the possibility of war. The people of Canada are opposed to war, and a war in such a distant part of the world holds no interest for Canada. Mr. Bennett has no right to commit the country before consulting the people by means of a plebiscite.

This solemn declaration of principle as guidance for the Prime Ministers of Canada, I should say, applied to Mr. King just as much as to Mr. Bennett. And the commitment is clear: Mr. King was not going to do it, although that bad man Bennett might.

Early in 1938 a by-election was held in St. Henry, Montreal. Colleagues of Mr. King, responsible Ministers of the Crown, spoke at

that by-election, voicing a policy which the electors had to assume was the policy of the Government. At a public meeting in January Hon. Mr. Cardin said:

I have already so stated ten times: Canada will not participate in wars beyond its territory. Canada will do nothing in wars beyond Canadian territory. What do you want more? What do you want better? I am for the defence of my country 100 per cent—150 per cent if that were possible, but when other nations are at war I am nought per cent.

I could add many more quotations, but I refrain because if I did I might arouse a feeling of contempt for and revulsion against men who now hold positions of great confidence, and I have quoted enough to support my point.

I submit it is clear that the pledge of Mr. King was not to engage Canada in a foreign war without a plebiscite; and in the case of Mr. Cardin, not to have Canada take part in a war in Europe by sending soldiers overseas, either volunteers or conscripts. These pledges were broken in September, 1939, when Parliament declared war on Germany. Was the Liberal party seriously assailed or taken to task as a result? Not at all. Certainly at that time I heard no reference in Parliament to broken promises or false pledges. On the contrary, when Canada declared war on Germany there arose from the nation a sigh of relief because we had not been betrayed.

But we are told that the commitment which the Government now wishes to be relieved of, not by Parliament, but by the voters, is something entirely different and more serious, and therefore more binding. It is this: When Canada, through its Parliament, served notice on Germany that it was going to use its might and power to co-operate with the forces of Christianity and civilization to crush Hitler's evil and sinister designs, the Prime Minister said there would be no conscription of manpower in Canada. No doubt this assurance brought cheer to the enemy, and to those in our land who will not admit that the Liberal party may have been wrong in the sad experience of 1917, referred to yesterday by the honourable senator from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Gouin). But was this pledge more binding than the ones I have just mentioned as having been broken? Is it more dignified in character than the pledge that no soldiers would be sent abroad to take part in any war? Is it more sacred because it may have given comfort to the enemy, and he may have been deceived by it? Surely not.

Then what is the difference? Is there any? In the one case the pledge was, "We will not send soldiers overseas"; in the other, the