

*Mobilization Act—Mr. Gardiner*

were proposed by my government I would resign from that government. That is what I said, and that is what I repeat to-day. But for the defence of my country, for the defence of Canada, no! The defence of the fatherland is the duty of every citizen and it is an obligation for everyone to defend Canada. This bill provides that its powers may not be exercised in so far as the question of compulsion is concerned in connection with service overseas.

I repeat, I read these two quotations to the house to-day in order to place clearly before hon. members and the country the position which was taken by the government two years ago when the National Resources Mobilization Act was submitted to this house.

On Wednesday of last week we had the privilege of listening to a speech from the leader of the government outlining the present position of the government in relation to this matter, a position in which we find ourselves as a result of having made certain declarations to the people of Canada over a period of time, and as a result of having asked the people to release us from the obligations that we had taken upon ourselves by these declarations. It was stated to this house that we had asked the people of Canada to free the government from any restrictions on its actions, and on this occasion I submit we are asking the house to free the government from any restrictions upon its actions in matters having to do with the prosecution of the war. It has been stated in this house, it was stated on Wednesday last, that a "yes" vote on the plebiscite was not a "yes" vote for conscription, and it has been stated in the house and will be repeated during this debate that a "yes" vote on this amendment is not a vote for conscription. This bill is to free the government, to enable it to give consideration to the question whether conscription for overseas service or for any other purpose is necessary for the prosecution of the war.

Having reviewed that matter, may I call attention to this question. What will be the effect of the act as a result of this amendment? Again I read from a speech of the Prime Minister delivered in this house on the occasion when the bill was first introduced. Speaking on June 18, 1940, at page 900 of *Hansard*, the Prime Minister stated:

I come now to the inquiry as to how we are going to exercise this power. I would say in a word that we shall continue to exercise all the powers we have or may be given, just as we have from the beginning of the war when exceptional powers were first given to us. We are not going to exercise all these powers—put into effect the provisions in their entirety—within the next 24 hours. We need enabling legislation—for that is what it is—to enable the government to meet each situation as it arises in the most effective way it can possibly be met. The need to-morrow may be for one thing

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in one place; the need the day after may be for something else in another place. We do not know how the situation will develop in the next little while, but we want to be in a position to take the most effective action in the shortest possible time.

I submit that when the amendment is made to the act we shall be in exactly the same position with regard to everything for which the act provides. The Prime Minister has merely stated that he desires to be free to do certain things now, and also free not to do certain things now. He has stated very clearly to the house that he desires to be free to send men outside what has been defined in the original act as the boundaries of Canada into the areas immediately surrounding our coasts; and I am sure that when the news came over the radio this morning with regard to the activities of the Japanese in the Aleutian islands the necessity for such a change in the legislation was recognized at once. I venture to say that there is not a member of this house who would not consider at this time, as being too great a restriction, the provision which is now in the act that no soldier called up under this legislation can be asked to cross the boundaries of the Dominion of Canada. Under any such provision, if the Japanese were able to force their way to the Alaska boundary we would have to stop at the Alaska boundary if our men raised under the act were able to drive them back to that point, and we would not be able to cross the boundary. It will be recognized therefore that some change has to be made in that particular at the present time.

As the Prime Minister stated in this house it does not necessarily mean that we shall be sending troops overseas immediately. I believe he even went so far as to suggest that it may never become necessary to do so. We shall have powers under the legislation as it will be enlarged to do certain things that must be done immediately, and, on the other hand, to give consideration as time passes to the question whether other things should be done. In this regard it was emphasized to the house the other day that it would be inadvisable for this house to have to take action on two different occasions in order to get authority to do these two things, one of which ought to be done immediately, and the other of which may never be required to be done.

Having stated that position with regard to the legislation itself and the attitude of the government towards it, and with regard to the statement made the other day to the house, may I be permitted for a few moments to discuss a question which was raised by the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Perley) in his speech a few days ago. On that occasion he