

*Plebiscite Act*

this very easily so far as my riding is concerned. It was left to the intelligence of the voter.

Mr. HOMUTH: That did not solve it.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: They put the cross in the right place. Does this committee realize that Japan is still at our doors and that we are wasting time talking a lot of nonsense?

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): And holding a plebiscite.

Mr. HANSELL: I know I am of small stature, Mr. Chairman, but some time I may fill the shoes of a Minister of Agriculture, and then perhaps I can be seen and heard. I agree with all that has been said with respect to the confusion that may arise over this form of ballot. The hon. member for Caribou has called attention to the wording of the ballot paper and suggested that when people vote they will read what is at the top of the ballot. I am more concerned as to what the people will read about in respect to what they are voting for. I am more confused about that than I am about the form of the ballot. The question to be asked of the voters is this:

Are you in favour of releasing the government from any obligation arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service?

I have tried to think my way through that, and I can think of only two methods of raising men: One is by conscription and the other is by voluntary enlistment. There may be some regulations governing methods. The government may be confused over whether they should send a postcard when a man is to be called up for military service or whether they should send an officer along to tell him he is required. I would ask the minister what methods of raising men for military service are used now, and what commitments have been made that restrict the government to any particular methods of raising men. I do not believe that the government are restricted in their methods of raising men. Where they are restricted is as to where to send the men after they are raised. But that does not appear on the ballot, and I think people are going to be confused as to what they are voting for when they read the question.

While on the question of the ballot, I appreciate the minister's suggestion that we let the ballot stand until he can reconsider its form. But if he is going to reconsider the ballot at all, there are a few other matters he should consider, and first is the thing I have already mentioned, the question to be asked. I should like at the proper time, Mr. Chairman, to submit an amendment. I do not know whether now is the proper time or not,

[Mr. Cruickshank.]

but I will submit it for consideration, and if this is the time to vote on it, the minister may accept it and embody it in the ballot for our consideration when he comes back. I move that the following words be added to the question appearing on the ballot paper: "in any theatre of war." The question then will read:

Are you in favour of releasing the government from any obligation arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service in any theatre of war.

Then the people will know what they are voting upon. I think it is only fair to say that the whole country believes that they are going to vote on whether or not there shall be conscription of men for service. But that is not what the ballot states.

There is another thing about this ballot. I have received a good many letters recently in connection with the plebiscite, and the general contention of the people who have inquired of me is that they are not going to vote for the conscription of men for overseas service if they are not privileged to vote on the conscription of finance. I think that is a reasonable attitude to take because, after all, the man who is conscripted to face shot and shell and who gives his life for his country is giving all he has. Surely there should be some mobilization and conscription of other things too. The government desires to be released from its commitments. I would suggest that another question be added to the ballot paper, and I would suggest that it read this way. I move this as an amendment:

That a second question be placed upon the ballot paper as follows:

Are you in favour of the conscription of the financial institutions of Canada so that the government can fulfil its commitment to issue currency and credit in terms of public need?

I pass these amendments along to you, Mr. Chairman, and I send copies of each of them to the minister. I trust that when the ballot comes back we shall find it amended exactly as I have suggested, and that the questions will be printed accordingly. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I shall gladly support the ballot if it is so amended.

The CHAIRMAN: We can take only one amendment at a time. It is moved by the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Hansell) that the following words be added to the question appearing on the ballot: "in any theatre of war."

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Would you be kind enough to read it, Mr. Chairman?