

advocate against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament.

I beseech the Prime Minister to alter his purpose while yet it is not too late, to adopt a manly course, to give to the country that measure of national leadership for which it is so earnestly looking and seeking at this time of gravest crisis in the world's history. This house will support him. The nation will support him.

What is to be the form of this plebiscite? What question or questions will it carry? Will it merely ask approval of a release of the government from a past commitment restricting the method of raising men for military service, as indicated in the speech from the throne, or what? Who is to vote? When will the vote be taken? What machinery will be used? Will our soldiers, sailors and airmen, at home and overseas, have the opportunity of voting—that privilege which at present is denied them in by-elections? What list will be used? Will there be a new registration? There should be.

What is the estimated cost of the plebiscite? When will it be held? Time is an all-important factor under conditions as they are to-day. And I ask this question seriously: What effect will the announcement of this plebiscite have upon the pending war loan? I venture to think, disastrous. Has the government considered the risk to our war effort involved by the delay in having to hold this plebiscite before any major change in policy can be effected? Will it take two months, or three months, or how long? The enemy may have won a decisive victory before then, while we indulge in a plebiscite. What a tragedy! Mr. Roosevelt, that master of epigram, recently said: "Lost ground can always be regained; lost time never." All these and kindred questions the Prime Minister should make plain when he speaks, and I invite him to do so.

What will the government do if the plebiscite is indecisive, if the majority is small? That is a possibility. Will the government then claim that it has a mandate to pursue its present policies? Or will it say that, that expedient having failed, we shall try another course? Meantime, while Nero fiddles, Rome burns! The whole thing is fantastic.

If the plebiscite carries, what then? We have no commitment from the ministry as to what they will do. The speech from the

throne indicates that the administration will then take the position that, subject only to its responsibility to parliament—and I am glad to learn that the administration admits that it has responsibility to parliament—the administration shall, irrespective of any previous commitment, possess complete freedom to act in accordance with its judgment of the needs of the situation as they may arise. They do not ask for a mandate under this plebiscite; they ask for a blank cheque. We do not know what will be done. What is to be done under that blank cheque? Will it be, as it has been in the past, a matter of political expediency and not of vital reality? I fear so. That, Mr. Speaker, is altogether too narrow an undertaking. Rather, it is no undertaking at all. It will not satisfy the public demand. It will not constitute a policy which will meet the gravest crisis in the world's history. It is no policy at all. It is merely a palliative.

And what if this plebiscite is rejected by the people of Canada? What then is to be the position? Will the government resign? Or will the Prime Minister endeavour to carry on, cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, by a self-imposed vow which renders it impossible to carry out his other pledge to the people of Canada that he will meet total war with total effort, that he will prosecute total war with total effort? What of the pledge of the Minister of National Defence that Canada, along with the other democracies, will stop at nothing—these are the minister's words; do they mean anything?—which can be effectively done to ensure that the forces of evil shall be stamped out? Will the minister resign if this plebiscite does not carry? Knowing him as I do, I believe he will.

But what of the Prime Minister? Surely if this proposal fails, his position will be impossible. Will he resign, or will he, no matter what the cost in lack of total war, continue to see his duty, as he stated in Winnipeg on July 10 last, "to seek above all else to preserve national unity?" That was his supreme objective then. That was why he did not propose to go to Britain; he must remain here to preserve national unity! Well, he went to Britain, and I think he did right. Did we have national unity in Canada? Have we had it all along? The answer comes back in a thousand tongues, that we have not national unity. We have something quite different; we only have unity of the Liberal party, and we shall never have national unity under a party government in war time. The two are incompatible.

Does the Prime Minister think that this subterfuge of a plebiscite to relieve his personal position and save his face makes for national