

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I understand that there is an amendment before the committee. Would you read it, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hansell has moved that the following words be added to the question appearing on the ballot: "in any theatre of war."

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: First of all, a word as to the question itself. The wording of the question was given the most careful study by the government in order that there might be no possibility of its having any meaning other than the one which appears upon its face. May I say, speaking of questions generally, that if hon. members are anxious to read into a question something other than what really is there, nothing in this world can prevent them from so doing. I venture to say that however differently worded the question might be, some hon. members would find equal objection to the new wording as proposed.

It has been suggested that we add the words "in any theatre of war." I have an objection to this, which I think hon. members will see immediately I express it. It would raise at once in the minds of a number of the people of this country a suspicion with regard to what the government has in mind, a suspicion which so far has not entered their minds. Some of them would begin to say "Oh, yes, we see what the government have in mind; they want to send our people, not merely to Great Britain, but to India, to Asia; they want to send them to other far distant quarters of the globe." No thought of the kind was in the mind of the government at the time the question was framed.

Mr. FAIR: What is in the government's mind now?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: It will decide what it will do with respect to the disposition of troops when it has full authority to act in the light of all the circumstances.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): It is admitted that the government has authority.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Full authority; moral authority as well as legal. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition throws back his head when I make mention of the word "moral," as though parliament had no moral obligation, as though the government had no moral obligation of any kind. I am afraid those who take that particular point of view are being unduly influenced by the nazi mentality and by the mentality of other nations that have thrown to the wind every obligation that may have existed between the people and their governments. I speak expressly of the

nazi position because the whole nazi policy is one that is based on broken pledges, one that is based on no faith in the pledged or promised word.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I resent that implication.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend may resent it, but he has laid himself open to it. The people of this country are going to view very carefully the attitude of hon. gentlemen who say that the government has no moral obligation to the people in regard to a matter that affects their lives and which only a few weeks ago many of them were claiming was responsible for the return of the government to power. I regard what has been said by the government of this country with respect to commitments for overseas service as something that is an obligation of the most sacred character, and for that reason I intend to stand by it and the government intends to stand by it. We know that in so doing we will at least be helping to keep the confidence which exists in political institutions in Canada between the people of this country and their government, a confidence which has been completely lost in a great many other countries at the present time.

I am anxious to see this plebiscite carried. I am not anxious to add to its wording words that are going to create unwarranted suspicions in the minds of people who may be mostly attracted by certain words and attach to those words an entirely different meaning from that which should be attached to them. In that same connection may I say this? I cannot understand the attitude of hon. gentlemen who say they are anxious to see this plebiscite carried but who at the same time by their utterances—and I refer particularly to the leader of the opposition—are doing the utmost they possibly can to have the people of this country believe that there is some trick in the plebiscite which is being put before the people of this country. The leader of the opposition said last night that I was deliberately trying to fool the people, and yet he says he wants to see this plebiscite carried. Do you think people are going to turn out and support the plebiscite if they have reason to feel that they are being asked to lend themselves to some trick which the administration is seeking to put over them? I cannot understand the attitude of my hon. friend in taking that position, especially in view of what he has said in this house on more than one occasion this session, and for which I thank him. I thought he meant what he was saying when he was speaking as he did about attaching importance to the sincerity