

## Justifies His Stand

Prime Minister King offers cogent reasons to Parliament for the policy of his Government to consult the people by plebiscite on the question of giving his administration a freer hand in recruiting men for Canada's army. The responsibility of making a military decision will not be thrown upon the people, as the Government proposes to ask the people to give it full power to take whatever military decisions the Government itself may believe to be necessary. The question will be a simple one: "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?" Mr. King justifies this course and declares that his Government, far from shirking responsibility, is asking for it to a full degree.

The Premier answers those critics who press for a specific referendum or even a general election at this time. His objection to a referendum on conscription is that it would obligate the people to say what the policy should be, whereas he holds that the proper place to debate this question, and determine to what extent it should be applied, is the floor of Parliament. To hold an election would not be in the interest of the people, as the country would be left without a Parliament until the incoming Government assumed office. With the world crisis of such gravity, a general election would therefore be most unwise.

There are those who are urging the Government to ignore its past commitments to the people, to refuse to consult them, and forthwith adopt a policy of conscription for oversea service. Mr. King, however, is unalterably opposed to any such arbitrary action, or to any other course that would wilfully disregard the people, from whom, after all, Parliament and the Government alike derive their power. He rejects as equally unworthy the suggestion that the Government should repudiate its pledges to the electorate. The world has come to its sorry state, he reminds his critics, largely because of bad faith and broken pledges, which Hitler has erected into a principle of action, and which Canada is fighting to-day. Mr. King has veneration for the will of the people, and he proposes to do all that lies in his power to see that it prevails in the Government of this

country.

For these reasons a plebiscite is favoured by the Government as the best course which will remove all legitimate excuse for controversy and the one best calculated to maintain the unity of Canada in this struggle. The administration seeks to possess complete freedom of action, and this, if assured by the people, will receive vigorous and whole-hearted support by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, and also, he hopes, by Parliament and the country at large.

In a comprehensive review of Canada's war effort, Mr. King gives an impressive picture of what the Dominion has done to produce armaments and foodstuffs, build ships, raise an army for home defence and oversea service, expand its navy, create an air force, give aid to Britain and look to its own security in a joint program of preparedness with the United States. From almost scratch, it has come a long way in two and a half years; but it aims to go much farther in every aspect of its war activities, and is being geared to make a total effort. Every one will soon be selected for the job in which he or she is best fitted to serve.

A pleasing feature of the Prime Minister's statement of policy is his announcement that the Government will ask Parliament to make a gift of one billion dollars in credit to Britain. The largesse will be distributed in this way: Britain's shortage of Canadian dollars has become acute, and this will be overcome by Canada's supplying her, free of charge and without obligation, with the munitions of war, raw materials and foodstuffs of a value equal to that amount. There is no doubt that Parliament will heartily authorize this gesture of Canadian gratitude to the Motherland, and that, with like accord, the people of the Dominion will warmly approve of its being done.

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