

## “Not necessarily conscription but conscription if necessary”

Transcript of King's speech on Conscription entitled "National Security Plebiscite, April 7th 1942"

"The issue at present is not conscription; it is whether or not the government, subject to its responsibility to parliament, is to be free to decide that question itself in the light of all national considerations. The government is not asking you to say whether or not conscription should be adopted. That responsibility the government is asking you to leave to itself and to parliament, with entire freedom to decide the question on its merits.

The question of conscription, properly viewed, is a military question. The place to discuss it is in parliament. What the government now seeks for itself and for parliament is freedom to consider and debate and decide this question, like all other questions connected with the war, unrestricted by any pledge and in the light only of the needs of national security. A part of our forces should be kept in Canada to protect us against attack; a part of our forces should be sent overseas to help defeat the enemy and thus prevent him from attacking Canada. Both tasks are equally essential to our safety. Anyone who tells you that only one of these tasks is necessary is deceiving you. The government with the information which it alone possesses is in a position to decide where Canada's forces can be used to the greatest advantage in defending Canada, and in helping to defeat Germany and Japan, or how the armed forces required can best be raised. We do not ask the people to make that decision. But we believe the matter is so important that the government and parliament should be completely free to decide the question wholly on its merits.

Source: Parks Canada Website: [www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca)

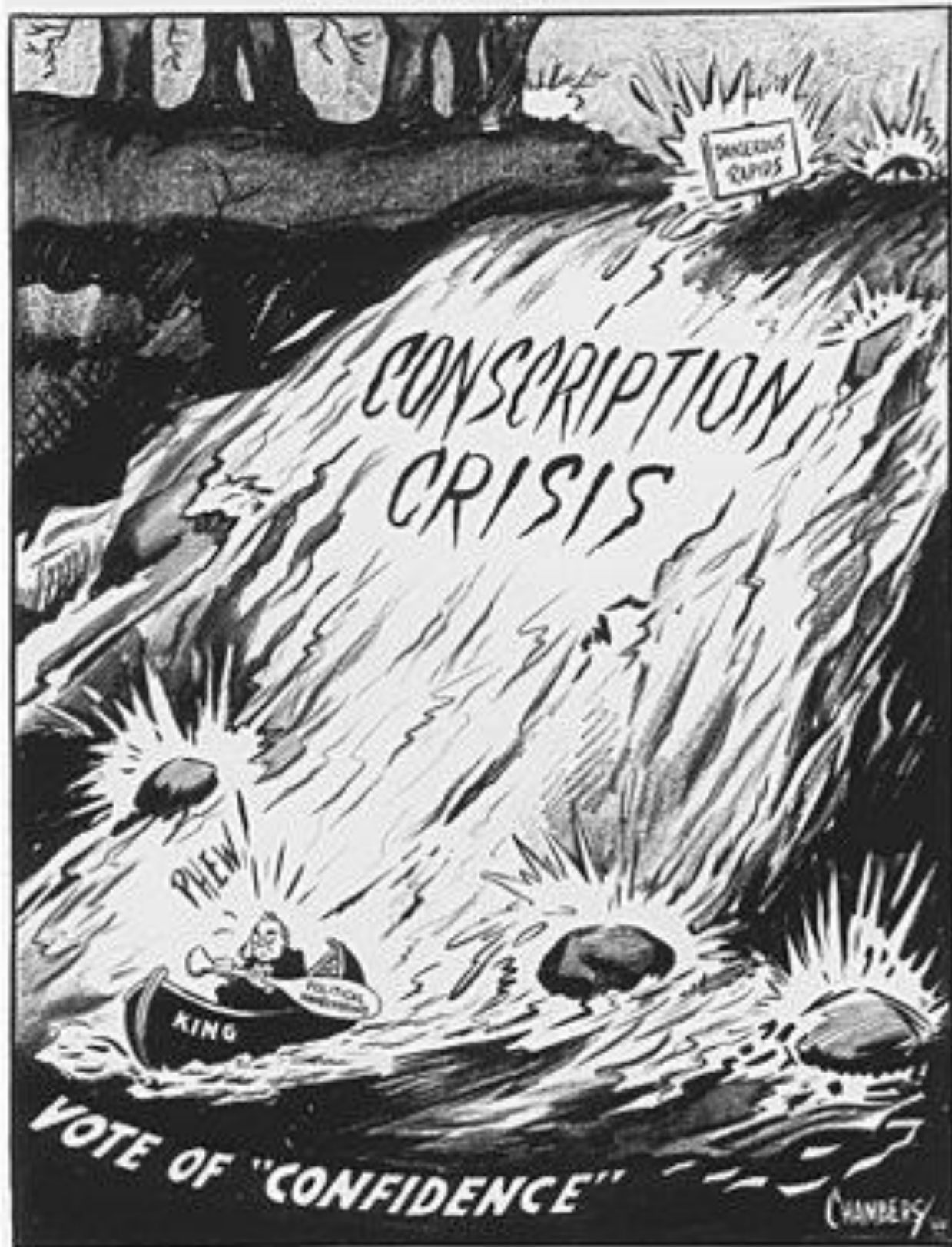
## The Plebiscite Question:

"Are you in favour of releasing the Government from any obligations arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service?" The plebiscite was held on April 27, 1942

Province	Voted Yes	Voted No
Prince Edward Island	23 568	4 869
Nova Scotia	120 763	35 840
New Brunswick	105 629	45 743
Quebec	375 650	971 925
Ontario	1 202 953	229 847
Manitoba	218 093	53 651
Saskatchewan	183 617	67 654
Alberta	186 624	75 880
British Columbia	253 844	62 033
Yukon	847	291
Total civilian vote	2 670 088	1 547 724
Military vote	251 118	60 885
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 921 206</b>	<b>1 608 609</b>

Source: *Le Devoir*, May 6, 1942

AND THAT'S THAT!



## **300 RIOT IN MONTREAL IN PROTEST ON DRAFT**

***Police Rout Youths, Arrest 4—  
'British Refugees' Assailed***

MONTREAL, April 24 (U.P.)—Feeling in this French-Canadian city against conscription of men for military service outside of Canada erupted late last night and early today in unauthorized street demonstrations, which were broken up by large detachments of policemen. About 300 excited youths participated in the demonstrations, the police estimated.

Four young men had been arrested at 1 A. M.

Two attempts to parade with banners bearing slogans opposing overseas conscription were broken up by the police before midnight following an anti-conscription meeting at Atwater Market that had been addressed by several members of Parliament from Quebec Province. The police said that agitators had been working on the feelings of the crowd at the Atwater Market meeting.

Such slogans as "Down With the British Refugees!" and "Down With the Dirty Refugees!" were shouted by the demonstrating students and others as they sought three times to converge on the seamen's manning depot at the Place Viger Hotel.

The meeting and subsequent demonstrations came as the Federal Government campaign in Monday's conscription plebiscite neared a climax. The government is asking that the dominion voters free it from a 1940 campaign pledge not to draft men to serve outside Canada.