

Mr. COPP: The department has come to the conclusion that if the judge disapproves of the application his decision should not be overridden.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I cannot lose this opportunity of congratulating the minister on having revised his opinion on that question. He was wrong for many years—

Mr. COPP: Not many.

Mr. MEIGHEN: —and I struggled hard enough to enlighten him, not, I rejoice to find, without ultimate success.

Mr. COPP: Thanks.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): As regards the naturalization of a Canadian citizen who returns to this country after having been naturalized in some other country, I can quite understand the minister's view, that there should be uniformity. But does he not think that five years is too long a period for a Canadian citizen, returning under these circumstances, to remain in this country before securing naturalization here and being restored to Canadian citizenship?

Mr. COPP: I might personally be of the same view as my hon. friend, but this question was carefully discussed at different imperial conferences and decided upon.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): How long ago was the decision arrived at?

Mr. COPP: The matter was under consideration from 1899 to 1914. The United States has the same provision; if one of their citizens becomes naturalized here and returns he must remain in the United States five years before he can regain his American citizenship. The same is true throughout the empire.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): When will there be another opportunity to discuss this question imperially? The decision, according to the minister, was come to about eleven years ago.

Mr. COPP: I presume at the next imperial conference, whenever that may be.

Mr. EULER: Under our present law a British woman marrying a foreigner becomes a foreigner. I understand that some time ago the British government had under consideration a change in that respect to provide that any British woman marrying a foreigner may elect whether she desires to become a citizen of the country of which her husband is a subject or whether she desires to remain a British subject. Is there any intention on the

part of the government to make a change in the law in that regard? To-day, if a Canadian girl, for example, marries an American citizen she loses her Canadian nationality and she does not gain the nationality of her husband; in a word, she is not a citizen of any country. That should not be, and it seems to me it ought to be possible in such a case for the woman to retain her nationality if she so desires.

Mr. COPP: I am informed that a resolution was passed, but no action was taken in regard to it, and we have not been consulted. Unless some further action is taken by the imperial authorities we would not be justified in proceeding with the matter here.

Mr. EULER: I was under the impression that the British authorities had communicated with the dominions.

Mr. COPP: Not on that point.

Mr. EULER: I do not like to be positive about it, but my recollection is very strong that the British government communicated with the governments of the dominions.

Mr. BAXTER: Can the minister inform me if there is any case now of a Canadian who discarded his British nationality, became a United States citizen, and subsequently desired to resume his British status, being held up by the department, or by the county court judge or whoever deals with these matters?

Mr. COPP: I do not remember any such cases.

Mr. BAXTER: Are there any in Nova Scotia? If the minister cannot answer me, I will obtain in the course of a few minutes the name of a man who, I am informed, is in the position I have indicated. There is another matter I want to advert to. A few years ago we had a discussion about delays in connection with naturalization. I do not wonder at the complaints which some hon. members then made. To-day we have been given instances of erroneous rulings made by certain county court judges. But I want to put in a plea that the country should, to some extent, bear with the necessary delays, and even the mistakes—if there are mistakes—of officials who are entrusted with this very important work. I think we ought to proceed on the assumption that the privilege of British nationality is not, per se, the right of any applicant, but is a distinct privilege granted on certain conditions. We ought to be absolutely satisfied as to the fitness of the applicant before we grant him the privilege, and personally I have not much sympathy with the