

ably done. I remember on one occasion an applicant was put through a series of questions with respect to what he knew about the method of government and politics in this country. I understand on one occasion an applicant was asked how he would vote at the next election, and he said that he would vote for the party which gave him the most money. In that case naturally the county court judge refused to grant naturalization.

Mr. COPP: The hon. member would be sure of his vote on that occasion.

Mr. HANSON: I was not looking for the vote. I do not have to buy votes. The hon. member himself belongs to a party which has done more to corrupt the electorate in New Brunswick than any other party in the history of this country. He only needs to go back to the records of some of his leaders in regard to that matter.

Mr. MARTELL: The hon. member should discuss the matter on its merits.

Mr. HANSON: I will, but I did not start this; I am not seeking to lower the plane of the discussion, I was citing that only as an illustration of a case in which a county court judge refused to make a favourable report. In addition to the examination and cross-examination of the applicant, county court judges whom I have seen operate under the act, have required that at least two reputable citizens in the community in which the applicant resides, should attend and give evidence corroborative of the character of the applicant and his fitness for British citizenship, which, after all, should not be regarded cheaply. My hon. friend and some hon. members to my left have stated that it is a hardship to ask a man to travel a hundred miles to attend an investigation personally before a county court judge. If British citizenship amounts to anything, if it is a thing of value, it is worth a journey of a hundred miles.

Mr. FORKE: That may not be necessary.

Mr. HANSON: It is worth a journey of a hundred miles to go before a county court judge, where a personal investigation may be made, where the applicant may be seen by a judicial authority who has an open mind and who is prepared to hand out even justice. I would deplore if this measure should carry if it has the effect of abolishing the investigation before a county court judge. I want to say a word for county court judges. I believe the county court judges in my province are men of honour and integrity, and that they will do their full duty as citizens under any statute that may be imposed upon them,

without regard to the petty questions of a fee or a mile. My hon. friend says that the examinations are cursory. He produces no proof of that statement. He cannot possibly know that of his personal knowledge. What he probably bases that statement upon is the shortness, the meagreness of the reports sent in. That is probably true; but that is a matter which, as I stated a moment ago, can and should be corrected. There is no reason why a county court judge should not make a full and true report of everything that transpires before him. As a matter of fact, now that there are, in most cases, stenographers in the county courts, there is no reason why the reports should not be accompanied by a transcript of the shorthand records taken of the examination. In New Brunswick, so far as I know, these examinations are never conducted in chambers; they are done in open court, and I believe it would be a distinctly retrograde step if the investigation before a county court judge were done away with, especially in view of the fact that there is nothing to take its place except the ipse dixit of some official in the city of Ottawa.

Mr. FORKE: I think I value the privilege of British citizenship as highly as any one. My hon. friend (Mr. Hanson) has referred to the fact that a man should be willing to travel a hundred miles in order to become a British citizen. I agree with him, but it may not be necessary to travel a hundred miles to do so. Consequently, if you can make this easier, so much the better. I am not very much interested in what happened in the past in regard to naturalization of citizens in this Dominion; I am more interested in what is going to happen in the future. Hon. members on different sides of the House seem to take a great interest in informing those who have newly come here just how iniquitous this matter was in days gone by. Well, we are looking for better times. I have had some little experience as regards naturalization papers, and I cannot subscribe to the idea that the judges have been negligent in their duties. I have always found judges willing and ready to make the necessary examination and to see that an applicant receives his citizenship if he is entitled to it. As regards asking questions to find out whether applicants are fit for citizenship or not, I am just as well pleased that that is not applied to all voters who would vote, because they would sometimes be in a pretty difficult position if they had to answer questions as regards what qualifies a man to vote and his fitness to vote. I do not, however, believe in making the test too easy.