

all events that is the law to-day. I do not speak of my own knowledge in this matter; I simply speak of my impression of it. But I notice that the member for Calgary the other day said that if a citizen of Germany is naturalized in Canada, he remains a citizen of Germany and would be liable to be shot if taken prisoner in the theatre of war. This is what he said:

Ceasing to be Britons, if they were taken prisoners in the front line trenches, they would be shot as traitors, because they owed military allegiance to Germany and Austria.

I think that the member for Calgary is right in that respect. If we sent a man of German origin to the front, he would, if taken prisoner, be treated as a deserter and accordingly might be liable to be shot. Our own Naturalization Act has been cautious on this point. The certificate of Naturalization says:

This is therefore to certify to all whom it may concern, that under and by virtue of the said Act . . . . . has become naturalized as a British subject, and is, within Canada, entitled to all political and other rights, powers and privileges, and subject to all obligations to which a natural-born British subject is entitled or subject within Canada, with this qualification, that he shall not, when within the limits of the foreign state of which he was a subject (or citizen) previous to the date hereof, be deemed to be a British subject unless he has ceased to be a subject (or citizen) of that state, in pursuance of the laws thereof, or in pursuance of a treaty or convention to that effect.

In other words, we do not pretend in our Naturalization Act to claim jurisdiction over a subject when he goes to his own country. We cannot do that unless his native country divests itself of jurisdiction over him, or unless there was a treaty between the two countries, and so far as I know there is no treaty between Great Britain and Germany. So I think the position which was taken the other evening by my hon. friend from Calgary is perfectly sound. If we were to send a man of German origin to the trenches, and if he happened to be taken prisoner, he might be treated as a deserter by Germany. What is the conclusion we are to draw from this? The Military Service Act which we passed the other day makes no reservations on this point. Section 2 says:

Every male British subject who comes within one of the classes described in section 3 of this Act (that is, between the ages of twenty and forty-five) shall be liable to be called out as hereinafter provided on active service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force for the defence of Canada, either in or beyond Canada.

This means that every man of military age, whether he is a British subject by birth

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]

or naturalization, is liable to be conscripted. Take the case of a boy six years of age, who happened to come to this country with his father in April, 1902. He would now be twenty-one and a voter, and liable to be conscripted. I agree with my honourable friend from Calgary that it would be unthinkable, it would be murderous, if we were to send such a man to the front when there was a possibility of him being treated as a deserter by our enemies if he were taken prisoner. The measure before the House takes care of that in the following provision:

All persons who are by the terms of paragraphs (g) and (h) of section 67 of this Act disqualified from voting, with such of their sons as on polling day are not of legal age shall be, and shall be held, exempt from combatant military and naval service.

In other words, a man who is liable to be conscripted can purchase his release by renouncing his privileges as a citizen and as a voter. That, I think, is a proper interpretation of the Act. My hon. friend from Calgary argued that a man of the class I have just described could be conscripted unless he renounced his privileges as a voter. I take a different view from my hon. friend both in his premises and in his conclusion. It seems to me that this man ought not to lose his privileges as a voter. He has left Germany and come to this country. He has become interested in this country, so much so that he desires the privileges of British citizenship. The Government which he has left still claims the right of life and death over him. It seems to me that this man ought to be treated as a British subject. His heart must be somewhere, and his heart would probably be where his home is. I would say this to my hon. friend from Calgary: there is far more to be gained by trusting people than by distrusting them. And if I object to this legislation, it is not so much for its present effect, as for the effect it will have in the future. We are striving to make Canada, young nation as we are, a great and powerful nation. We have long realized that to do that by ourselves would be a long and painful task. We have opened our door to the whole world, and have sent our agents everywhere. I have here a pamphlet in the German language urging Germans and Austrians to settle in Canada: we offer them everything we have. Many of these people have come to our country; they have settled here and behaved well, and we cannot break faith with them. The Germans have committed crimes in this war that have no