

*Canadian Citizenship*

ship is very lofty. I agree to a certain extent with the hon. member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges, who is sponsoring legislation to come before us later to make more impressive the ceremony of adjudicating upon certificates of citizenship. If there is no definition of citizenship in the bill, if we do not agree to work together to draft a satisfactory definition of citizenship, there will be 244 definitions of it offered by the members of this committee. I say 244 instead of 245 because of the unavoidable absence of the former member for Parkdale, Doctor Bruce. Here we are and each member may have his own definition, and more than one; he may offer two; he may offer three; he may offer four, so that we may be confronted with a volume of definitions, so much so that nobody will understand any of them. What is this great privilege which we confer, for instance, upon some person coming to us from Czechoslovakia who has never heard before of democracy and citizenship, or upon some brave man from the steppes of Russia who never had an opportunity to vote for several candidates in the few elections held in his own country? Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

One has only to look at what is going on in the west where there are so many people of different races. They are doing well. They work together. They show a fine spirit of unison in promoting the interests of this country. Yet the western provinces are the least English and perhaps the least French of all the provinces of Canada. This shows that people may come to us from all over the world and join together with the common and definite purpose of making good here and of serving this country as good Canadians. That is our ambition for them.

What will be the immigration policy of this government, I do not know, and I am not interested in that at the present time. What I am now interested in is in finding ways and means of impressing those who come here from other countries that it is a great privilege to be a Canadian citizen because Canada is the finest country in the world. That must be impressed upon them, and they must be told in very clear language what citizenship is, so that they can abide by the law. If there is a good definition of citizenship in the act it will serve a good purpose because then there will be no ambiguity about it. The newcomer will be told: Here is your duty according to the law. Those who have been living in totalitarian countries do not care much about kings. They do not care much about some of the institutions which many Canadians cherish. But they do respect

[Mr. Pouliot.]

the law, and if we want them to act as good Canadian citizens they must know what the law is and they must abide by it.

I must tell you, Mr. Chairman, that during the past fifteen years I have not been enthusiastic about all the pieces of legislation that have been submitted to us. Some were wrong, and others which were good were wrongly drafted. This is the first opportunity I have to make good a piece of legislation which can better serve the definite purpose of uniting Canada than any lectures given by university professors or highly paid speakers who go round addressing the various clubs.

I have taken this matter to heart and discussed it with the hon. members for Charlevoix-Saguenay, and Jacques Cartier, and there is one definition of a Canadian citizen which has been arrived at. It is this. A Canadian citizen is a person who has a combination of public rights and duties. Another and more complete definition of citizenship would be a combination of public rights and duties of persons domiciled in Canada. Perhaps that is not complete, but it will serve as a basis for discussion, a much better basis than the discussion of racial origin, and it is very close to that which was given by the leader of the C.C.F. group. It refers to a Canadian subject. There is a shade of difference between a Canadian subject and a Canadian citizen, because in the definition of Canadian subject the link between the subject and the king appears. A Canadian subject would be one who by birth or by naturalization is a subject of His Majesty the King of Canada. That is another definition though it probably will not be agreed to by all the members. Opinions are free. The members who do not agree to it may have suggestions of their own to offer. We live in a free country, but the rule in a free country is the rule of the majority, and I do not see why an imposing majority of Canadians at heart should cater to a small and noisy minority of Canadians of different opinions, which may be respectable just the same. We are all here to decide what the act shall be. It may be unpleasant to some of us, but as we are here we have to submit to the rule of the majority. I did it so often myself that I understand it very well. I submitted to it even when I disagreed with everybody. It is the law of the country, and the only thing to do is to try to improve the law by making some suggestions. At the present time my contention is not at all that I am infallible in offering these definitions; it is a contribution to the discussion, and I invite most cordially my colleagues of all