

Mr. COPP: I have the British act before me. My deputy is not here, but I am informed by him that this is an exact copy of the act passed by the British parliament last year.

Section agreed to.

On section 4—Repeal:

Mr. NEILL: Apparently this abolishes the system formerly followed of candidates for naturalization going before a county court judge. What is proposed to be substituted now?

Mr. COPP: This is a new section and provides for a different method of application for naturalization. Originally naturalization applications were made to judges of the courts who either issued or refused certificates as they thought fit. But in 1914 a change was made by which persons desiring naturalization were required to go to the clerks of court in the different localities in the various provinces and file with them a petition for naturalization. The clerk posted the application in his office for three months, at the end of which time the applicant would be advised of the date at which the court would meet. The applicant would then present himself personally before a judge who, upon inquiry and investigation, either approved or disapproved of the application, forwarding his report upon the same to the Department of the Secretary of State. The department in the past few years has found in the large majority of cases that after the application had been investigated by the judge a further inquiry was necessary. I may remark here that the applicant pays a fee of \$5 when he files his application with the clerk for naturalization. The practice has been for the Department of the Secretary of State to refer the application to the Immigration department to ascertain whether or not the applicant entered the country legally in the first place, and has since spent the required period therein, prior to application. The matter is then referred to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for investigation and report, upon which we act. While I have had personally only one year's experience of this matter, I am informed by my deputy that it has been found almost invariably that these so-called investigations by the judges have been inadequate, and that the department cannot act upon the reports made by the judges without further investigation. We therefore felt that it was in the interests of the applicant as well as of the country that there should be a uniform method of granting naturalization, by providing an opportunity

for all those seeking naturalization to make their application direct to the State department. The practice of having judges investigate these applications has proved in the past to be a waste of time. We have found that a great many applicants, particularly in the West, where the bulk of the applications come from, have to drive great distances to the court, and sometimes an applicant fails to receive notice of the day the court is to sit. This method is altogether unsatisfactory and we considered it best to provide that all applications should be made direct to the Department of the Secretary of State, thus obviating the employment of counsel. Under the system now proposed the application form will be filled in and forwarded to the State department and the investigation carried on from that source.

Mr. NEILL: The minister's last words gave me the information I wanted; that is, the man now applies direct to the minister.

Mr. COPP: Yes.

Mr. NEILL: That is what I wanted to know. I heartily agree with the provision to do away with the old system of applying to the county court judge. It resulted in a great deal of hardship to people desiring naturalization. Not only had they to go once before the judge—very often at an extremely inconvenient time because of the short notice given—but they also had to come again and take some oaths before the registrar, which meant sometimes a journey of two hundred miles twice. And I know of cases where owing to the way the boats ran the applicants for naturalization did not arrive until after the judge had concluded the sittings and would not again hold court at that particular place for another three months. I am entirely in accord with doing away with this system, which was expensive and inconvenient to the alien. I am quite in favour of increasing the restrictions surrounding naturalization, if necessary, but there is nothing to be gained by making it personally expensive, and very often it meant a cost as high as \$200 before the applicant could become naturalized.

Mr. LUCAS: What is the cost to the applicant?

Mr. COPP: That is a matter of regulation, and has not been decided. Personally I have felt that the present fee of \$5 which is paid to the clerk should be paid directly to the Department of State. These fees would provide the carrying charges for the whole Naturalization branch.