

*Supply—Secretary of State*

fused by the judge without any just ground. This is a hardship on these people. I am inclined to believe that the act should be amended so as to provide an appeal to either the minister or someone else. I have nothing against a county court judge, but supposing he is partial in some way or feels that he does not want to issue naturalization papers to a man, there is no redress, no other place where the man can go. This entails expense and inconvenience. It would be better if we would accept such men into our citizenship and let them take their part in the affairs of our country. If we did that, they would be better citizens than they are to-day.

Mr. COPP: The question of naturalization and the machinery and administration of the act are rather complicated. An applicant has to reside in the Dominion for five years. He has to make application to the clerk of the court. Notice of application has to be posted in his office for three months. Then the judge must hear the man's application. He is entitled to appear in person and be heard, and he can bring any persons there in regard to his qualifications, reputation and character, in order to prove to the judge his worthiness and proper qualifications. I quite understand that the reports that are received from different judges throughout Canada are not all uniform. Some will take exceptions different from those taken by others. That is the law, and unless there is some amendment providing for appeal to some other body or official I do not know that anything can very well be done. I shall be glad to consider any suggestions that may be made.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: I think that there should be some appeal from the decision of the judge. I know that in many cases men are refused naturalization papers on the strength of nothing more than a rumour that they intend to use it as a means of getting to the United States, and in such cases there should be some recourse.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Is the judge's decision the last word, or has not the department some power to issue certificates irrespective of what the judge may decide? I know of a great many cases of injustice in my own constituency. I do not suggest that naturalization should be made cheap and open to everyone indiscriminately, but there are cases of hardship where men who have been in the country ten and fifteen years, and even as long as thirty years are refused naturalization without good reason. I know of one case in particular of a man who has been in this country thirty years; he has raised a thoroughly re-

[Mr. Beaubien.]

spectable family and in all that time there has been nothing against the character of either himself or his family. But the old man himself is not able to read and write the English language although he speaks English as correctly as may be expected of one who cannot write it. There is absolutely nothing against him. And yet he has been definitely refused a certificate of naturalization. Naturally he feels that he has no share in the institutions of the country and he feels that his children are dubbed foreigners in the district, although they are all able to read and write and are in every way good citizens. I heartily endorse a good deal of what my hon. friend (Mr. Beaubien) has said; I think there should be some provision for an appeal from the judge's decision. At any rate, I think the minister ought to have the right to grant the certificate irrespective of the judge's decision, where he deems it wise to do so.

Mr. COPP: The act does not say anything about being able to read or write; it provides for an adequate knowledge of either English or French. As to just what "adequate" means, that is left to the judge to decide. It is not right to assume that the Secretary of State has any right to override the judge's decision. When the application comes in the department may make a further investigation if this is considered necessary; and whether or not the judge approves of the application the department can refuse the certificate. This matter was before parliament two years ago, when it was suggested that the application should be made direct to the department or to some official in Ottawa in order to avoid delay, and that if the department were satisfied that the applicant was qualified the certificate could be issued forthwith. In the present administration of the act there is of course more or less delay; the applicant has to go to the court, a notice must be posted up, the application must be heard by the judge, and the clerk must send in the report; and if the clerk is not active in forwarding the report then the matter is held up. In some cases we have actually written to the court to find out the cause of the delay. This delay should not be considered so serious a matter in view of the importance of the applicant's naturalization, but there is a strong demand, particularly from the west, that something be done to get rid of this delay. Unless the act is amended materially I do not see what can be done.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: Has the minister the power under the act to-day to grant the certificate where the judge has not approved of the application?