

would ask the careful attention of hon. members:

For the purposes of this Act, the allegiance or nationality of a person, as it was at the birth of such person, shall be deemed incapable of being changed, or of having been changed, merely by reason or in consequence of marriage or change of allegiance or naturalization of any other person, or otherwise than by personal naturalization of such first mentioned person. Provided, however,—

I would call the attention of the House to this most peculiar provision.

Provided, however, that this subsection shall not apply to any person born on the Continent of North America, nor to any person who in person applies to and obtains from any judge having jurisdiction in naturalization proceedings, a certificate under the hand of such judge and the seal, if any, of his court, to the effect following:

I am not going to read the certificate, but in effect it is this, that the judge shall certify that the person who makes application for the certificate has proven to him that he or she is qualified for personal naturalization. He then grants a voting certificate, which must not be confused with the naturalization certificate. The person who makes application is already legally naturalized, but in order to obtain the right to vote she must obtain a voting certificate before her name can be placed on the list. Perhaps this is not very clear to many members, and in order that the significance of that clause may be fully grasped, it is necessary to refer to the provisions of the Naturalization Act itself. Under the naturalization law there is one outstanding feature that applies to my resolution, and it is this: The wife of a British subject is herself a British subject; in other words, if a woman of foreign birth marries a man who is a British subject, she herself immediately becomes a British subject. If her husband is also of foreign birth and he becomes naturalized, she at the same time automatically becomes naturalized. Moreover, the minor children of such a man become naturalized with him. It follows then that foreign-born women married to foreign-born men who are legally naturalized are just as truly and legally Canadian citizens as are their foreign-born husbands.

Now, if the right to the franchise is based on citizenship, my contention is that the woman who is naturalized legally should have the right to vote just as unrestrictedly as her husband, who also is foreign-born. I stated a moment ago that the bill as originally drafted disfranchised something like 100,000 British

[Mr. Euler.]

subjects who happened to be born in what are sometimes called the Central Empires—Germany and Austria-Hungary. I am not making any particular reference to that except to say that under this clause which I am now discussing even if those women did go to a judge to obtain voting certificates—and, remember, they were British subjects—the judge could not grant them such certificates, for the simple reason that they were not qualified for naturalization, the Naturalization Act at that time absolutely forbidding the naturalization of persons who originally came from the countries with which we were at war. In justice to the then government it must be said that they disclaimed all intention of giving the law that effect, and they brought in an amendment placing those foreign-born women on exactly the same plane as other foreign-born women, making it necessary for them, however, as for others, to obtain this voting certificate before they could vote, although, as I say, they were naturalized British subjects.

The government of the day amended the Dominion Elections Act in the session of 1920. The matter remained in that position until the following session of 1921, when, believing that it was not yet properly settled, I brought it up again in Committee of the Whole and proposed an amendment similar to this one, but it was voted down, and again I proposed it on the third reading of the bill, with the same result. But mark this, the government of the day admitted again that there was an injustice there, and a second time they brought down an amendment that to some extent removed the disability.

But what the House will be particularly interested in now, after hearing that perhaps as a bit of history, is as to the actual present status of foreign-born women in Canada who are legally naturalized. This is the effect of the law: That married women in Canada, if of foreign birth and naturalized as the result of being the wives of British subjects must, before they can vote, apply to a judge for a voting certificate, although they are legally and actually Canadian citizens. I must qualify that statement; there are three exceptions, one most peculiar. The first is that all women who voted in the elections of 1917 are not subject to this peculiar provision, making it necessary for them to secure a voting certificate; then, again, men and women who became naturalized as boys and girls