

by the judge. Now from the reports we receive, the investigation that is held by the judges is not of such a character that the department which is charged with the responsibility of issuing the certificate can act upon it.

Mr. MARTELL: Why?

Mr. COPP: First, because the judges are only supposed to hold a very cursory examination under the act. Second, during the first years of the operation of this act the judges were paid for doing this work, and at the present time they are not being paid for doing it. That takes away a very great deal of the interest that the judges—for they are only human after all—might otherwise have in making the investigation if the whole responsibility were upon them. The Judges' Act precludes the judges from being paid any remuneration for doing this work, and under the act they realize that their examination and investigation is only intended to be cursory, and the report that is made by the judges contains a few remarks, approved or disapproved.

I would draw the attention of my hon. friend for South Simcoe (Mr. Boys), and my hon. friend for Welland (Mr. German) to this, that irrespective of the judge's report the same investigation has to be carried on by the department under the act. I appreciate the views my hon. friend holds and, to some extent, sympathize with him, because when this matter was first brought to my attention I thought it was a very proper thing to continue the investigation by the judge; but having had fifteen or sixteen months' experience in the administration of the act I find this procedure to be an absolute waste of time and of money. When the report comes from the judge we have to make a specific inquiry into the character and standing of the person who had applied for naturalization. What do we do? We first apply to the Department of Immigration and we find out when the man entered the country, whether he entered legally, whether his name is on record at the port of entry, and whether he has been a resident of Canada long enough to become naturalized:

Mr. MARTELL: The judge should find all that out.

Mr. COPP: He does not do so and the department has to get this information. We have to find out the character and standing or reputation of the applicant during the time he has been a resident of Canada. In addition to making inquiry from the Department

of Immigration we may also conduct an investigation through the Mounted Police.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): Are they scattered all over?

Mr. COPP: Yes.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): In every province?

Mr. COPP: Yes. We also correspond with the local police, if necessary, in order to learn the required facts. Now, what I say to my hon. friend—and I think any legal gentleman will agree with me—is that in many cases a judge in a certain part of the province of Ontario, for example, after making an inquiry and examination will approve of an application, whereas a judge in another part of the country, with the same evidence before him, will disapprove of it. The department, as I say, makes this examination and inquiry and in many cases, notwithstanding that reports have come in from the judges approving of naturalization, we, after our own inquiry turn down the application and refuse to issue naturalization certificates. In other cases when the judges have sent in a report disapproving of the application of a man to become a British subject we, after careful inquiry, have been convinced that he is a fit and proper person to be naturalized and issue the certificate accordingly. Therefore, I contend that the time occupied in making this inquiry through the judge, under the law as it now stands, is absolutely wasted; the matter comes back to the department in the end. Such, at any rate, has been the experience of the department during the years that elapsed since 1914. The department must take the whole responsibility and it is entirely in its discretion to say whether the naturalization certificate should be issued or not.

In the larger centres the same difficulty does not arise, but it becomes a serious matter in the case of an applicant in the West who may reside from one to two hundred miles away from the place where he has to make application to the court. Under the law as it stands to-day the application has to be made to the clerk of the court and it is hung up in the clerk's office for three long months. The clerk may fail to send the applicant notice of the date when he has to be present to substantiate his application, but whether he notifies him or not the fact remains, that the applicant may have to travel from one to two hundred miles for that purpose because he has to be present in person to be examined by the judge.