

Mr. MEIGHEN: Never. Never was there an hour in the history of this country when a woman did not become a naturalized citizen by reason of marriage.

Mr. EULER: I am not saying that. She had, as a married woman, a right to personal naturalization which she does not have now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Very good. Admitting that the hon. gentleman is right; that a woman could have become naturalized by process, the same as a man, even though she were constructively naturalized by marriage, even so the fact remains that the woman always did become naturalized by marriage, and the man never became naturalized by marriage. He had to undergo all those tests, to live up to all those requirements, whereas, the woman did not have to do that at all.

Mr. EULER: You removed it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. gentleman from his seat state that that distinction has not always existed, that a woman has always been admitted to citizenship by marriage and that a man never has?

Mr. EULER: That is not the point.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is my only point. If the hon. gentleman really wants to dispute that point, I should be glad to have him rise. That distinction has always existed. It may be a wrong distinction—I am not arguing that at all. What the hon. gentleman says is that, although a woman always became naturalized by marriage, we in 1919 took away a method by which she could otherwise become naturalized. Assume that he is right and that that method was taken away in 1919—from memory, I express the opinion that he is wrong—the woman did not need to become naturalized by that method; she could become naturalized by marriage and in no other way. She does not need to take the other process, the hon. gentleman says, but by becoming naturalized, and by that fact alone, she should be admitted to the suffrage. What I am seeking to impress upon the House is that there has been inequality in the admission to the status of citizenship all through the history of this Dominion, of the British Empire and of every other civilized country under the sun.

Then we came to that stage in the development of our nation when it was thought wise to admit women to the right of suffrage. This situation at once presented

itself, that men, admitted to the right of suffrage because of citizenship, had around them those safeguards, but women admitted to the right of suffrage, merely because of citizenship, in all those cases had around them no safeguards at all. Consequently if the mere admission to the status of citizenship in itself gave the right of suffrage, then necessarily there would be inequality, then necessarily, in the case of women, there would be an absence of those safeguards that have been thought wise in the case of men. Let me ask this question again, for after all, reason in these matters is infinitely better than passion, than taunt and quip. Does anyone know of any reason why there should be distinction in admission to citizenship and no distinction in admission to the right of suffrage? Does anyone know why, if we should admit to the right of suffrage merely on the unequal basis of citizenship, we should not go back and so alter the law that all would be admitted to citizenship exactly on an equal basis? If hon. gentlemen can answer that, I will admit that they have at least reached the point which they have never reached before in a discussion of this question. Will hon. gentlemen from their places state that citizenship is something in respect of which all sexes, all races, should be treated precisely alike? The hon. member for George Etienne Cartier shakes his head indicating a negative. Is that not strange, coming from him who has just sat down with that speech in favour of unlimited equality on his lips? If hon. gentlemen will take the stand that they propose to legislate in this Parliament that admission to the status of citizenship shall be the same for man as for woman, then all right, this question is solved, and they are in a strong position when they say that admission to the right of suffrage should be the same for both man and woman. Place the first on an equal basis and the second follows automatically; leave the first on an unequal basis and then, if the second follows automatically, it is not equality at all but inequality. Now, it was with the view of removing that inequality, which arose out of the inequality in the elevation to the status of citizenship, and of doing so with the least possible infringement or impairment of right of suffrage consistent with the safety of the suffrage itself, that that amendment was introduced. I know, speaking on purely theoretical grounds, that there is a discrimination in it, in our endeavouring to