

*Naturalization Acts*

had something to do with the work of the judges under this act, in the way of watching it at least, and I have observed that the judges exercise just as much care in connection with their duties in this respect as they do in any other—indeed, a lot more care than could possibly be exercised by the minister or by his deputy on questions such as this. The act calls for giving notice to the public in the immediate territory where the applicant resides. It is notice that the public are almost bound to see, because there must be posting, not behind the door of the court house, but conspicuously in the court house. That is the provision of section 20.

Mr. COPP: Will my right hon. friend read that section?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes. It says:

The application shall be delivered at the office of the clerk or other proper officer of the court during office hours, and such application shall be posted by such clerk or other proper officer in a conspicuous place in his office.

Mr. COPP: In his office, not in the court house.

Mr. MEIGHEN: In a conspicuous place, not behind the door. That would not be conspicuous.

Mr. JACOBS: When the door is closed it is conspicuous.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The section continues:

The applicant shall also post up a copy of such application in a conspicuous place in the post office nearest to his place of residence.

Mr. COPP: That is repealed.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Repealed in 1920? Then I would recommend that it be put in again, if it is thoroughness of investigation that the minister wants. At all events, there must be posting in a conspicuous place. In that way everyone gets to know who wants to know, and undoubtedly a great many get to know of these applications for naturalization. Time is allowed within which inquiry may be made and objection may be taken. All this procedure serves as a deterrent against fraudulent naturalization by residents. A man is not going to put in his application knowing that he will have to go before a judge, take his oath and submit to cross-examination—he is not going to do it if it is a fraudulent application. The chance is very slight that anyone will fraudulently set to work to get naturalization for the purposes of the franchise. But remove all this, and simply have a sort of subterranean investigation as to which there will be no report that the public can ever get, some sort of investi-

[Mr. Meighen.]

gation like a detective department would get under way to find out the character of a supposed culprit—substitute such an investigation for this open, public inquiry before a judge, and it merely says to all and sundry: If you want naturalization, depend on the Secretary of State. It simply puts the whole country in the hands of the Secretary of State as to who shall have the franchise. The minister says he has the power anyway. I do not think he has. But if there is any fault with the present legislation it is that the restrictions are too few. Let us not wipe away the restraints that there are.

Mr. COPP: My right hon. friend has, as usual, resorted in his argument to a great deal of special pleading. He first thought that the sections I read were not a part of our act; we now find that they are.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister thought they were not.

Mr. COPP: The provisions were properly passed and have been acted upon for the last eight years, whether rightly or wrongly is a question that is open to discussion. Personally I believe they are proper provisions. Sections 23 and 24 provide that a report must be made by the judges of our county court. But what I was chiefly pointing out was that this report filed by a judge of the county court was of no particular value. My right hon. friend rushes to the support of the county judges, who, it is intimated, I have villainously attacked. Well, I do not think I said anything in derogation of them, but I do say that those judges, realizing that their report has, in the final analysis, no effect on the question on whether or not a naturalization certificate shall be granted, pay no particular attention to the holding of an inquiry. The hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Hanson) also rushes to the defence of the judges of New Brunswick whom I have, in his opinion, maligned in suggesting that they did not make the investigation as properly and as carefully as they would do if they were responsible for determining whether or not the certificate should be issued. If I understand the argument of the hon. member for York-Sunbury, it is that the law should be left as it is and that the applicant should have a lawyer to go to the court and plead his case for him. I contend it is the duty of this parliament and of the State department to give persons who come to this country every possible facility for acquiring the rights of citizenship.

Mr. FORKE: Does the minister believe that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police