

stated the other evening, quite a few of these boys of German origin have given up their lives on the battlefield. These boys enlisted only because they felt that it was their duty to do so. We are proud that in the constituency of North Waterloo over 300 boys of German origin enlisted; and many of them are to-day in the trenches in France. As a matter of simple justice, as a matter of right—because these people have been here not for five or ten years, but half a century longer than many of us can remember, I ask the Prime Minister and members of this House to back me up in my simple request that these people receive some standing in the community by being granted naturalization as soon as possible.

I wish to refer to a remark made by the member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) in this House the other day. He stated that at a patriotic meeting held in the little town of Elmira, he received a frigid reception. I believe that the hon. member is mistaken with regard to the sentiment that prevailed at that meeting. Elmira is my home town, my birthplace, and I think I know the people there about as well as any man does. They are not given a great deal in these days to handclapping and flag-waving, but my hon. friend's speech that night must have made a tremendous impression, because the secretary of the Patriotic Fund informed me to-day that the little town of Elmira stood almost as high as any town or village in Ontario in respect of the amount of money given. In justice, therefore, to the town of my birth, it is only fair and right that I should make this remark with respect to what the member for South Wellington said in this House. I do feel that he was entirely mistaken with regard to the sentiment that exists in that place.

I have placed my request before the Prime Minister and the members of the House; I feel that if it is granted the country will be the gainer. We must remember, Sir, that this is a cosmopolitan country. We invited these people to come here to be citizens of Canada, and they have accepted the invitation. They are here; they own property; they have tried to build up their part of the country, and in my riding they have succeeded wonderfully well in that respect. I therefore hope that the Prime Minister will see his way clear to granting some relief to these people, and I can assure him it will be very highly appreciated.

Let me read a clipping from the Detroit News of a few days ago. It is dealing with

[Mr. Weichel.]

the situation across the border, which in my opinion is practically the same situation we have here, for theirs is a cosmopolitan population to a greater degree even than ours. The Detroit News says:

Whatever has happened in the past three years, we should now begin to get our balance, and renew our trust and address ourselves to proving to our Canadian friends and fellow-citizens of German ancestry that a democracy is not merely a name, but that it has at its core a profound brotherly feeling of man for man, whatever his ancestry; that it means at root justice and fair dealing; that it means sympathy and love for those with real heart-aches; that it means mutual help and mutual service; that it means the strengthening and building of inseparable bonds of friendship and the banishment of doubts and fears; that a true democracy is a realm where each may do and must do his part for the help of all, and do that which he is qualified to do best for the upbuilding of the nation, which in plain truth means to make our neighbour wiser, stronger and better; that in thus making each citizen stronger we make the nation so powerful for right that might has no place in our life.

The conscientious objector when exemption from military service is granted is deprived of his voting privileges during the war-time election. In my riding I have many of this class, called Mennonites. I have lived among them all my lifetime and can vouch for their honesty of purpose and integrity of character. They are God-fearing people, whose faith teaches them to abstain from taking up arms. I can conscientiously say that they have lived up to their faith, and many of their leading men have intimated to me their desire not to take part in any war-time election.

Lastly, I hope that the Prime Minister may make a statement regarding the request I have placed before this House and the country.

Right Hon. Sir ROBERT BORDEN: As my hon. friend from North Waterloo (Mr. Weichel) has made a personal appeal to me in the observations which he has just addressed to the House, it is proper that I should make a statement as to the policy of the Government in such matters. The Secretary of State spoke with regard to this matter the other evening, and I have little to add to what he placed before the House on that occasion. I entirely agree with what the hon. member for North Waterloo has said with respect to the good service which have been rendered to the country by the class of citizens to whom he referred. We all know that there are no more prosperous, progressive or thriving communities in the Dominion than those which have been built up by men of German descent in those counties in the