

ago, although with no great degree of enthusiasm, but I felt it was my duty to take my stand and support the measure.

If hon. gentlemen who oppose this amendment would be kind enough to make a step in our direction and take it upon themselves to defend the amendment, I feel sure that they would easily rally the opinion of the majority of Canadians if it were properly explained.

Let me say that it is futile to expect to reach a much larger degree of national unity in this country if the minority is always asked to yield to the views of the majority. I shall conclude with a sentence from Lord Acton, as follows:

The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.

Amendment (Mr. Alistair Stewart) negatived.

Section agreed to.

On section 27—Rights and obligations.

Mr. BURTON: I should like to say a word or two in connection with this section. I need not apologize for taking up any of the time of the committee, because so far I have not taken part in the debate on this bill on any of the stages it has gone through. There are, however, a number of observations which I feel it my duty to make to the committee. But before doing so I wish to join with those who at other stages of the discussion have complimented the Secretary of State on having brought the bill before the house. I would remind the minister as well as other hon. members that, speaking in this house several years ago, I called attention to the desirability of something of this kind, and also pointed out the unfortunate position in which many of our people found themselves when the census official came around, because they were at a loss to understand why they could not call themselves Canadian citizens.

This section provides that a Canadian citizen shall, subject to the provisions of the act, be entitled to all the rights, powers and privileges and be subject to all the obligations, duties and liabilities to which a natural-born Canadian citizen is entitled. That is something on which the Secretary of State should be congratulated. In another section of the bill provision is made for a certain amount of education along these lines. But this, I would point out, is something that has been long overdue. When we are talking about rights and privileges I rather feel that we all, in years gone by, have been too negligent in impressing upon those who take

upon themselves the citizenship of this country that the rights and privileges went along with corresponding duties and obligations.

Too often in the past have interests in this country, too often have different people, for their own purposes, made use of those who were brought in from other lands. They treated them well, no doubt, so long as it suited their purposes to do so, and then cast them aside and made light of their entry into Canada.

I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that many people came to the country from foreign lands with an honest and sincere desire to establish homes here for themselves, their children and their children's children for generations to come. While it is quite true—I am sorry I have to admit the fact—that occasionally some, a small number compared to the total number of those who came in, have not shown themselves worthy of the benefits, rights and privileges conferred upon them in the citizenship granted to them at that time, nevertheless the vast majority of those who came from other lands and assumed their duties and responsibilities, together with the rights and privileges that were conferred upon them, were sincere, and have endeavoured to live up to their responsibilities throughout the years. Too often have we in one way or another led them to believe that so far as the rest of us were concerned we were only too eager, when occasion arose, to treat their citizenship documents as a mere scrap of paper to be torn up at somebody's pleasure. On two occasions within our memory we have had people in this country who fulfilled every duty and obligation imposed upon them by their citizenship, and then we have found those people treated in a way unbecoming to citizens of Canada.

I regret to have to draw attention to this, but right in the constituency I have the honour to represent there were dozens and dozens of people, at whom I defy anyone to point the finger of suspicion or scorn, who had to go to the mounted police and have their fingerprints recorded. They had to report regularly—people who had sons in the active services—people with sons overseas in defence of their country of adoption. And yet someone has been responsible for having these people report regularly to the mounted police over a period of time, incurring the stigma attached to having their fingerprints taken. Do you call that doing something, with respect to people coming from foreign lands in order to take out citizenship papers here, to make them fully conscious of the privileges conferred upon them? Does treatment of this kind encourage them?