

*Naturalization Acts*

make it. I ask the minister what is he going to substitute for the investigation which has been made in the past by the county court judges, or is he going to have it all done here at Ottawa by correspondence? Is he going to take the recommendation of someone who says that the applicant is a fit and proper person to become a naturalized citizen of this country, or is he going to have a proper investigation made to see that the applicant is really entitled and is a proper person to become naturalized?

Mr. GERMAN: All I know about this bill—

Mr. McQUARRIE: I should like an answer to my question.

The CHAIRMAN: Oh, the minister will answer the question.

Mr. GERMAN: I quite agree with the minister that three months is quite too long a time for an application for naturalization to be held up in the office of the clerk of the county court. It really does not give the general public any notice that application is being made because the general public does not visit the office of the clerk of the county court. But I cannot agree at all with the minister when he suggests that the investigation should be taken out of the hands of the county court judge and placed in the hands of an officer of the Mounted Police. If the minister is impeaching the integrity and the wisdom of the judges who are appointed by the Dominion government I would like him to say so, but how any person can imagine that a member of the Mounted Police is more fitted to make an investigation as to the qualifications of a man to become naturalized than a county court judge I cannot possibly understand.

In our Niagara district we have very many foreigners from whom there is a continual stream of applications for naturalization. The notices are posted as the law requires, in the office of the clerk of the county court for three months. I say that is altogether too long, I cannot see the necessity for that length of time at all. What I would suggest is that a person who desires naturalization should go before a judge of the county court and be examined by him. The examination is not made in open court but in the judge's chambers. The applicant should submit himself to examination there, and if the judge of the county court reports to the Secretary of State that the man is entitled to naturalization, then he should become naturalized. That is a simple process, it is an inexpensive process, and it is a speedy process. If on

[Mr. McQuarrie.]

the other hand you have the investigation made by officers of the department, though I am quite sure that an officer of the department would make a very thorough and proper investigation, the investigation would be expensive, and you can see the time that would be lost if notice has to be sent to Ottawa and an officer of the department sent up there at the expense of the country to examine the applicant. Why should that expense be incurred when you have a judge of the county court there who is eminently capable of making the examination, is entirely impartial, and can make the examination at once?

To talk about an examination by an officer of the Mounted Police I submit is absolutely absurd. It is wrong; it should not be allowed. It is not even to be made by the officers; it does not say "officers", it says by a member of the Mounted Police. I know that the Mounted Police is a very good force composed of good men, intelligent men, but they are not by their training or their position fitted to make such an examination as is required in this case. I think it would be a great mistake if the department takes this examination out of the hands of the county court judges, who are appointed by this government. Let them reduce the time, let the investigation be made at once by a judge of the county court. He will make an impartial report, an intelligent report, a report that will have the confidence of the people of this country.

Mr. COPP: In answer to my hon. friend for New Westminster (Mr. McQuarrie) who asked what we proposed to substitute for the investigation that is now held by county court judges, I would say that we do not propose to substitute any investigation for the investigation that is now made by the judges. From the experience we have had since this act has been in operation, the report from the judge is of absolutely no use to the department.

Mr. BOYS: Why does the minister say that?

Mr. COPP: I will tell my hon. friend if he will have patience.

Mr. BOYS: I have seen a good many examinations take place in court, and they are very thorough and reliable.

Mr. COPP: I have too. I do not say that all the reports are not of some use. The act under which we are now working, the act passed in 1914, for which I am not responsible, provides that this investigation is to be held