

women, I pointed out certain anomalies which would result unless some amendment were made in the Naturalization Act, or some other provision enacted to meet the possibilities to which I am about to refer.

Under the present law of Canada it is necessary that a man shall be either a natural-born or a naturalized citizen of His Majesty in order that he may exercise the franchise. But inasmuch as a woman merely by her marriage to a natural-born or naturalized British subject becomes a British subject herself, it might be that without some such precautionary enactment as I have referred to, a woman residing only a few weeks or a few months in Canada would be entitled to exercise the franchise. On the other hand, there is the converse difficulty: that a woman who was a natural-born British subject and who married an alien would, merely by the fact of her marriage, lose the right to vote. These questions seemed to present very considerable difficulty, and I had much doubt at one time whether they could be met and solved without an amendment of the Naturalization Act itself. I think there is a good deal to be said for some amendment which would give to a woman the right to determine her own nationality, notwithstanding her marriage, because if a woman, notwithstanding her marriage, is to have the right to exercise the franchise in this country, the natural conclusion therefrom would be that she ought to have the right to determine her own nationality. However, if we waited for any such amendment of the Naturalization Act, it is possible that we would have to wait a long time; therefore, we have endeavoured so to provide in this Bill that such difficulties as those to which I have alluded cannot possibly arise.

The measure is a very short one, and I hope hon. gentlemen will understand that its length does not at all correspond to the amount of time that was bestowed upon it before this solution was found. It is proper that I should give an explanation of the Bill, which is within very short compass.

Section 1 provides, in the first subsection, as follows:

1.—(1) Every female person shall be entitled to vote at a Dominion election who,—

- (a) is a British subject;
 - (b) is of the full age of twenty-one years and upwards;
 - (c) has resided in the constituency in which she seeks to vote for a period of at least three months immediately preceding the date of the issue of the writ for an election in such constituency; and,
 - (d) is not disqualified on account of race, blood or original nationality to vote at
- [Sir Robert Borden.]

elections for members of the Legislative Assembly of the province in which the constituency is situate in which such female person seeks to vote.

Hon. gentlemen will observe that a period of three months immediately preceding the election is required in the particular constituency in which the woman shall be entitled to vote. It follows from certain dispositions to which I shall refer later that the woman, unless she is a natural-born or a naturalized British subject, must have lived in this country for a much longer period. Paragraph (d) provides that we shall follow the enactments of provincial legislatures with regard to disqualification on account of race, blood or original nationality.

Sir SAM HUGHES: What is meant by "blood"?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I understand that this is the form of expression which has been used in some of the provincial enactments alluded to.

Sir SAM HUGHES: It is not shown as a quotation; that is why I asked.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: No, but the same language is used in order that we may follow precisely the law of the provinces in that respect.

Sir SAM HUGHES: Is there any intention of enfranchising the Indians? They are fighting at the front like heroes.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: We have not taken that into consideration in this Bill. Subsection (2) provides that

For the purposes of this Act a female person shall be deemed to be a British subject,—

- (a) if she was born a British subject and is unmarried or is married to a British subject, and has not become a subject of any foreign power; or,
- (b) if she has herself been personally naturalized as a British subject and has not since become the subject of a foreign power; or,
- (c) if, being a married woman and previously an alien, she has become a British subject by marriage, or by the naturalization as a British subject of her father while she was a minor, and in either case has done nothing (other than in the second case by marriage) to forfeit or lose her status as a British subject, and obtain and presents to the official in charge of the preparation or revision of the voters' lists of the said constituency a certificate, under the signature of a judge or any court of record or of any superior court, under the seal of the said court, certifying that such female person is of the full age of twenty-one years, has resided in Canada a sufficient length of time, and is possessed of all requirements necessary to entitle her, if unmarried, to become naturalized as a British subject, and that she has taken the oath of allegiance to His Majesty; or,