

Parliament took the very serious decision of declaring war on Germany, in order to help stop the spread of totalitarianism. Like the United States, Canada paid her own way throughout the war and sent aid to twenty-four other countries. We signed an agreement with the United States to join with you to protect ourselves and to that agreement we have adhered. I hope that this record makes clear our anti-totalitarian attitude.

FISHER: It does indeed. Now I want to turn for a moment from looking with you outside your border, Gentlemen, to an action you have taken inside them that has aroused great interest in the United States.

CLAXTON: I can see that question coming. It's Canadian citizenship.

FISHER: Right, Mr. Claxton. Many, even in my country, have been most interested in your recent legislation on this subject. I wish you would tell us something about it!

CLAXTON: The Canadian Citizenship Act, Mr. Fisher, came into effect on the 1st of January of this year, and gives legal definition to a long-standing recognized fact.

FISHER: Well now, just what does that mean?

ST. LAURENT: Simply, Mr. Fisher, it creates for Canadians the same legal status in their own country as the citizens of the United States have in theirs. Before the Act was passed, the formal legal description of Canadian was "British Subject". That is what appeared on their passports and other official documents.

CLAXTON: The average person, I imagine, doesn't worry much about these legal distinctions and definitions until he needs to. Most Canadians have always simply thought of themselves as Canadians - just that - and proud to be so.

ST. LAURENT: That is true. But it was felt that the time had come to give a legal form and basis to these common-sense ideas - to bring legal definitions in this matter up-to-date with constitutional and political development.

FISHER: There is just one other point, Mr. St. Laurent, which I should like to have cleared up. Does all this mean that Canadians now have a dual citizenship?

ST. LAURENT: The situation is, I think, easy to understand, Mr. Fisher. Canadians are citizens of Canada. But because members of the British Commonwealth have a common King, Canadians are also subjects of that King and termed British subjects. Being British subjects does not mean that we are subject to any other government but our own. It only means that the King of Great Britain is the King of Canada as well.

CLAXTON: I would like to add two more titles to which Canadians can, and do, lay claim. Canadians are not only citizens of Canada and British subjects, but they are, like yourselves, good North Americans and very active and interested members of the United Nations. Now, Mr. Fisher, it has never seemed to me that any confusion need arise over the status of the citizens of the United States simply because the United States itself is a member of a Pan American Union and a leading member of the United Nations. Similarly, I do not think that any confusion need arise because Canadian citizens can call themselves by other names. They remain Canadian citizens first and foremost. There is a very old saying in the part of Canada that Mr. St. Laurent and I come from: "Moi je suis Canadien".