

At the same time, many of the anomalies that had previously existed have been cured. For example, married women were formerly classed with infants and lunatics as "persons under a disability". On marriage, a woman automatically took the nationality of her husband, and there was no way by which she could divest herself of his nationality while he was alive.

Now, under the Citizenship Act, married women are given equal rights with other individuals, and many decide for themselves the nationality which they wish to retain or adopt.

I do not intend to-day to go into all the details of the Act, but to avoid any possible misapprehension as to our continuing status as British Subjects, I should point out that Section 26 of the Act definitely states "a Canadian Citizen is a British Subject".

There may be some people who fear that our action in Canada in creating Canadian Citizenship may tend to weaken our Commonwealth ties, but in order to reassure them I would point out that our Act has been adopted as a model by other parts of the Commonwealth.

It is a development in our Commonwealth structure, and only a few weeks ago a Bill was introduced at Westminster adopting the principle of our Canadian Act and differentiating between "British Subjects" and "Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies".

What is of interest to us to-day is not so much the details of the Act, but the problems that arise as a result of the Act.

I have no doubt that you will all agree with me that if we expect our people to take citizenship seriously they should understand its implications, and recognize that the privileges of citizenship carry with them definite obligations and responsibilities.

When an applicant for naturalization comes up before a Court for examination, he is required to satisfy the Judge that, amongst other things, he is of good character, has an adequate knowledge of either the English or French language, as well as knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Citizenship.

In the past, as may be well imagined, there was a wide variation throughout the country in the standard required by the various Judges. Some were satisfied with a perfunctory examination while others were rigid. In some cases applicants were turned down through lack of qualifications, while no facilities had been provided for their instruction.

In order to secure some degree of uniformity throughout the country, I wrote to all the Judges asking for their opinions as to the minimum standards that they would recommend, and a summary was made of their replies.

Briefly, they considered that good character should consist of something more than a negative police record; and that adequate knowledge of English or French should consist of an ability to read a simple letter or newspaper.