

Miss AGNES C. MACPHAIL (Southeast Grey): Mr. Speaker: I think that what women really want to-day is perfect equality with men, and therefore if the striking out of section 29 of the Dominion Elections Act in its entirety does not confer upon women perfectly and entirely equal rights with men, then, I think, it is not going far enough. To me it would seem that if a woman were herself a naturalized Canadian it would not matter whom she married, or whether she was married at all, because she would still be permanently a Canadian, a naturalized Canadian. On the other hand, if she were not a naturalized Canadian herself, it would not matter whom she married, or whether she was married or not—she would not be a Canadian citizen. If that is not true then women must simply be deemed to be part of the goods and chattels of man—she is not an individual at all. I was surprised to hear the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) say that women from the United States were much more eligible to become Canadians than women from Europe; I was not aware that the party to which he belongs was so friendly to the people of the United States.

I think that in the very few remarks I have made I have voiced the opinion of Canadian women. I think women just want to be individuals, as men are individuals—no more and no less. And so I would like to see that principle embodied in the law, rather than that a woman should be made a citizen by marriage to a man who was himself a citizen.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Leader of the Opposition): I shall not allow the taunts of the hon. member for George Etienne Cartier (Mr. Jacobs) to deter me from discussing this question in, I hope, a fair manner, and, as I have some aspiration also, in an illuminating way, I cannot say that his remarks have added anything to the understanding of anybody as to either the legislation itself, its origin, its purpose, or its effect. The only impression my hon. friend made on me was this: If such was the character of the

4 p.m. discussion of a law he thought fit to offer this Parliament, what must have been the character of the representations he made regarding it before the electorate of his constituency. The hon. member says he was elected by the votes of five or six thousand of those whom he calls foreign women. Well, I can imagine five or six thousand women—perhaps not

speaking either of the two languages of our country and recently come to the city of Montreal—getting a most remarkable view of the law of Canada if they had to sit at the feet of the hon. member for George Etienne Cartier. I can imagine how prejudice would permeate his hearers just to the extent of his political activities.

There is undoubtedly in the law as it stands to-day a distinction between British subjects in the matter of the conferring upon them of the franchise—of that there is no question at all. Pass the motion of the hon. member for North Waterloo (Mr. Euler), bring in a bill and make it law, and there will still be a distinction between the rights to the franchise on the part of British subjects in this country, and a very great distinction and discrimination; and, I venture to say, this session will close without that discrimination being removed by hon. members opposite.

What is the discrimination we are treating of now? It is a discrimination which puts an additional burden on a certain class of women—on a class of women who have acquired naturalization by methods that have always been recognized, in this and every other country, as perfectly sufficient, which because of the relationship between man and woman as arising from marriage has always been recognized as perfectly sufficient, but which does not put the same restraints, qualifications and conditions around citizenship in the case of the woman as it puts in the case of a man. A man coming from another country to this Dominion in order to secure citizenship by the law of our land—and in principle our law in this respect conforms with the law of every other country in the world—that man must show not only that he is a resident here, but he must show that he has done certain things entitling him to have placed upon him the imprimatur of citizenship. He must, for example, now show that he has lived in our country for five years; he must show certain qualifications of citizenship; he must take a certain oath. He must show, as well, as I am informed by the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Guthrie), that he is able to converse in either of the two great languages of our country. Having done all these things, all men are treated alike and they are admitted to the citizenship of this Dominion. In the admission to citizenship, there is not equality. Let me repeat that sentence because it is at the bottom of this whole difficulty; it is at the bottom of the