

the Naturalization Act you will find that the requirements are as to good character, proper age, and the like. These are the qualifications that any country should require before granting citizenship. If they can satisfy a court or judge in that respect the certificate is granted. I do not look on it as a hardship or as an inconvenience. It has been pointed out that the exception of those born on the North American continent is a very grave exception. It worried some hon. gentleman that a negress from Florida could vote without making application for a certificate, and it was said that we discriminated against married women from France and Belgium. Those are very extreme cases. They will not arise. I would not hesitate a moment to say that there is nothing in such instances, and the House should not heed the appeal in that respect. I think the amendment should be voted down.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Will it be necessary for a woman applying before a judge for a certificate to bring her husband's naturalization certificate?

Mr. GUTHRIE: If I may be allowed to speak again, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the husband need be present, nor is it necessary to bring his certificate. All they have to do is to satisfy the judge that they are otherwise entitled to naturalization, except for that special clause in the naturalization Act, and if that be so, they will get the certificate to vote. There is no requirement about the husband being present or anything of that kind. I have no doubt any reasonable judge will be satisfied with the word of any respectable woman in regard to the matter. I do not know what the judge will require. Some judges may require more than others, but I am satisfied they will exercise a wide discretion and will grant every convenience that may be necessary.

Mr. S. W. JACOBS (George Etienne Cartier): The minister stated that one of the qualifications for a woman voter in the circumstance which he has just related is that of character. Now, is there anything in the Bill which says that the character of a male voter is to be taken into consideration. Why should a discrimination be made against the women in this respect? That is something I have yet to understand. I heard it mentioned on several occasions when the matter was up both on the second reading and in committee. The minister says that a woman in order to have a vote

[Mr. Guthrie.]

in Canada must have a good character, but there is nothing said in regard to the character of the man once he is on the list. When this whole question of the qualification of women was first broached in the House—I think it was brought up last year when the By-Elections' Act was introduced—I raised objection to it and opposed it as vigorously as I could, and I have objected to it in all its stages until this the final stage of the Bill, before it is put upon the statute book. I think it is only right that I should now most formally protest against this law in the name of thousands of women who will find themselves disfranchised under this Act. There is no question in my mind, and in the minds of many throughout the country, that this is nothing more or less than a scheme on the part of the Government to disfranchise a large body of voters who may possibly vote against the Government. I have stated that in the House on several occasions and I have not yet had a denial from the Government or any member of it. I know that anything I may say at this moment will have little effect on the Government because they are embarked on the scheme and intend to jam this clause through. I feel that they are very much like the Egyptians of old, whose hearts were hardened against the Israelites; but in that case we are told it was the Almighty himself who hardened their hearts. Well, I do not give the Government credit for being in association with the Almighty in any respect. Rather do I think that their hearts are hardened by Satan. Now, the only crime which these women have committed is that they have not been born in this country. If they were born on the North American continent, they would be qualified but seeing that they chose to be born in Europe, a judge must pass upon their qualification. That is what it amounts to, nothing more or less. They must not only be British subjects; but they must be super-British subjects. They must not only have married British subjects and lived with British subjects, but their characters must be good and they must have a certificate or imprimatur from a judge of the court of the district in which they reside before they can have the right to come before the returning officer and cast their votes, against the Government. In my own city of Montreal from ten to fifteen thousand women will be placed in this category, and their characters will have to be examined while they stand in queues in front of the judge. I can now understand why it is that we have increased the salaries of