

*Citizenship*

the word. It is derived from a combination of words, the original meaning of which was "denizen of a city." That phrase described those who had the right to rest within a city's walls. They were given certain privileges, benefits, and responsibilities, and had to meet certain standards enabling them to be safely admitted within a city's walls. Obviously, it would not have been wise to allow fifth columnists, saboteurs—

**An hon. Member:** Or Liberals.

**Mr. MacLean:**—or other undesirables into the city. That is the origin of the word. Its meaning in the present day has been widened. A citizen now is a member of a certain geographic area, usually a politically organized area; in other words, as universally recognized, he is now a citizen of a country.

● (1640)

Some will argue that the traditional conceptions of citizenship are no longer valid or relevant and that they should be modified beyond recognition or scrapped altogether. Some even go so far as to argue that the national citizenship requirements of any country are no longer valid.

The extremists say we are world citizens. This is the global village age. They say that people should be free to migrate at will and settle anywhere without hindrance, thereby benefitting from the natural and man made advantages that exist in any particular spot on the face of the globe.

I do not go that far. Perhaps the strongest argument that we are living in a global village is that we have global village idiots who try to suggest that is a viable situation for a country to espouse.

This extreme notion clashes head on with one of the deepest instincts and emotions that is shared by all of God's creatures, including human beings. It is a sense of wanting to belong somewhere, a sense of territorial requirement. It is a sense of having certain rights because you fulfil certain obligations within a given society or area. It is the territorial imperative that biologists speak about.

This sort of motion is perhaps best expressed by the well-known lines of Walter Scott in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel", although I am not sure about that, when he said, "Breathed there the man, with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said, this is my own my native land."

That brings us to this whole question of what is a reasonable attitude with regard to both immigration and emigration, the transfer of peoples from the surroundings, environment and culture from which they sprang. In many cases, their ancestors have lived there for aeons.

It is obvious that people living in any country who have struggled to build up conditions, institutions and a way of life which bears some resemblance to what they would desire, feel that they have a vested interest in what has been achieved. They feel they should have some say in what the rules should be for membership, in this case citizenship in the country. In that situation, any government has a very special obligation to try its best to represent not only its own point of view, but the point of view of

[Mr. MacLean.]

all the citizens of the country who evolve the conditions under which other people may join that country.

There is, of course, the other side of the coin. We cannot be too exclusive. We have to balance our selfish instinct of wanting to preserve what is ours for us, speaking now of the people already here, whether they are citizens or not. We have a moral obligation to all mankind. They have a right to share, to some extent at least, in the very favoured part of the world to which we lay claim and which we own as a country.

We cannot afford to be a complete dog in the manger. On the other hand, we have to be sensible and objective so that in our eagerness to be generous we do not water down the benefit of being a Canadian, or urge people to become Canadians who in the long run may regret the change.

There are many parts of the bill to which one can have no objection. I am pleased to see the amendments that give equality to the sexes, male and female. There is provision for either parent to apply for citizenship on behalf of a minor child. That is long overdue.

Under the new bill, women who did not acquire citizenship under the 1947 act because of marriage to foreign nationals may automatically acquire it upon notifying the minister. That is an obvious improvement.

It is sensible that the age of application for citizenship will be reduced to 18 from 21 years to make it consonant with many of our other laws, including the Elections Act.

Having said that, it would be arrogant for us to assume that the highest ambition of everyone in the world is to become like us and, in order to do that, become a Canadian. That is a superiority complex that we exhibit toward many cultures older and wiser than our own.

An immigrant may have been forced by the direct economic pressures to leave his culture and country to seek a livelihood in another land, in this case Canada. He may not look upon that as an unadulterated benefit. He must have mixed feelings. It must be a wrenching experience for anyone to decide to abandon the land where they were born and grew up, and to give up forever many of the cultural values that they hold so dear.

In many cases people are forced to do this. However, for many, due to conditions in various countries, economic and otherwise, emigration from their native land is their second choice. Therefore in our pell-mell rush to say we are doing would-be immigrants a tremendous favour by making them Canadians, doing it quickly to get it over with, I am not sure we are being entirely fair to the would-be immigrants.

The time when a person may apply for Canadian citizenship implies that around that time he should apply, and if he does not, he is probably under a bit of a cloud. There is some pressure on him to apply for Canadian citizenship. However, in the process of acquiring Canadian citizenship he automatically forfeits his other citizenship, whatever it may have been. His decision at that point has to become irrevocable. This is something we should take into consideration.

● (1650)

The bill proposes to require people with landed immigrant status to have only three years of residence rather