

*Naturalization Acts*

friend himself was responsible for putting through this House a few years ago. The original system of conferring naturalization was, as my hon. friend points out, through application made to the courts and heard in open court, and the notice was there from the first day of the sitting of the court until the last, so that anybody who wished to object to any application for naturalization might have an opportunity to do so. But the system is changed entirely; to-day the application is made to the clerk of the court and the notice is posted, not in any public place, not by publication in any newspaper, but simply in his own office. It may have been with the idea that any who wished to oppose the naturalization of a given applicant would go into the clerk's office to see whether or not the application was being made. The experience of the department is this: while one judge in a particular locality will hold an investigation, write on his report "approved," and pass it on to the State department, another judge, possibly upon exactly the same evidence, will write on a similar application, "disapproved."

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: That happens in everything.

Mr. COPP: There is a lack of uniformity; so that the responsibility is placed upon the department of making inquiries for themselves. We have to make that inquiry. The judge's report is practically of no advantage to the department. As to the suggestion of my hon. friend regarding the proposal made in this section, I would not for a moment object to allowing the matter to stand over so that his leader may be here when the discussion proceeds. I am very glad indeed to have had this discussion if only for a few moments, and I would like the members of the committee to think it over whether it is not wise to have this change made; not because I ask the committee to vote confidence in me in regard to naturalizing a man or not, for I hope the department of any government in power in this country would be beyond any suggestion of not acting properly in the matter. I am sure my hon. friend did not mean to suggest that I would use my office to naturalize people who were going to vote in a particular way.

Mr. GUTHRIE: My hon. friend forgets that according to rumour he may be succeeded very soon and become a judicial ornament.

Mr. COPP: If that good fortune comes to me more quickly than it did to my hon. friend, I sincerely trust that somebody will

[Mr. Copp.]

be selected to fill the position I now occupy who will endeavour to carry out the duties of his office in the same honest and straightforward way that I have attempted to discharge these duties. I have no objection whatever, if my hon. friend desires it, to having the matter stand over until the leader of the Opposition is here, and I would like hon. members of the committee to think the matter over because I feel that the more they do, the more they will be induced to come to the conclusion to which I have come after a very great deal of thought, that this is the proper method of carrying out our naturalization. In the meantime I might say to my hon. friend for St. John that if we could get a consolidation promptly, without delaying the House, if this matter is allowed to stand over I should be very glad to consider his suggestion.

Mr. BAXTER: I am very glad that the hon. Secretary of State has taken that position. I have been trying to run over the statutes now and I think it would not be a very long job. There would not be many sections.

I would not continue the discussion now if it were not that the Secretary of State wants hon. members to think the matter over. There is one subject to which I would like to call his attention in order that he may think it over before he comes here with his proposals. If I gather the structure of what will be the new bill correctly, all the applications through judicial offices will be eliminated and it will simply be an application to the Department of the Secretary of State. I am in entire accord with the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) who says that in some cases men have travelled over a couple of hundred miles and been put to great expense in getting their naturalization. I am sure we would all agree that the test in making a man a British subject ought to be his fitness, and not the distance he travels or the expense he is put to. What I want to call the attention of the Secretary of State to is this: By cutting out all that machinery he leaves apparently section 25 of the act of 1914, which puts practically the whole act in the hands of the Governor in Council by the making of regulations. Now I think there are matters there important enough to be prescribed in whatever Naturalization Act we are to have, that is, the functionaries who are to do things and the people who are to make the examination. The department ought to be able, I think, to suggest in the legislation the particular class of functionaries who are to make the examination, whether it is to be by the Mounted Police or whatever body it may be, rather than leaving it to be done by regula-