

boldt (Mr. Neely), and the reason I will vote against it is that I believe the great problem before this country to-day is the winning of this war; I believe that, in the winning of this war, as a war-time election, to my regret, has become inevitable, we should endeavour to secure a fair expression of the people's will. We have some 300,000 men as members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who cannot take in this election the same interest as they otherwise would. We have from 25,000 to 30,000 men dead in Europe, and I do not know how many lying ill in the hospitals there or prisoners in Germany. I am not prepared to admit that under these circumstances the members of a State whose laws of naturalization admit that they may take the oath of allegiance that entitles them to become British citizens and at the same time retain their home nationality, should at a time like this, be entrusted with the franchise. If I understand at all the principle of naturalization, it is that, that when a man swears allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain, it means that he has cut himself off from his former state and that Great Britain has a right to expect his service and his sacrifice and his support. And I say that when another nation says: you may take that oath; you may deceive the state in which you are settling; you may conceal the facts from that nation and we will if you ask us still give you protection and regard you as a German citizen—its citizens are not entitled to the franchise in Canada. But the law does not stop there; some might argue that this is a little thing and does not amount to very much because very few would take advantage of it. But let us refer again to 1913 law and see how much further it went. The general principle of naturalization is that once a man has lost his nationality in one country he cannot re-acquire it unless he again settles in the country. Let me refer to section 13 of the same law:

A former German who has not settled in Germany—

Note, he has left Germany, has become naturalized in another country and has not returned to Germany.

A former German, who has not settled in Germany, may be naturalized on his application by the Federal state to which he formerly belonged if he fulfils the requirements of section 8, paragraph 1, numbers 1 and 2; the child or adopted child of a former German has the same legal position. The Imperial Chancellor is to be informed before naturalization; naturalization does not take place if the Imperial Chancellor raises objections.

The provisions of paragraph 8, to which reference is made, are:

A foreigner who has settled in Germany may be naturalized, on his application, by the Federal State in whose territory such settlement has taken place—

(1) If, according to the laws of his previous home state, he is absolutely capable of transacting business, or would be absolutely capable of transacting business in the eye of German law, or if the application is made in accordance with section 7, paragraph 2, section 2, by his legal guardian or with his assent.

(2) If he has led an irreproachable life.

What does that mean? It means that anybody who came to Canada from the very beginning of the colonization that took place in this country until to-day, could become a German citizen again if he cared to make application to Germany, although his residence was still in Canada, by demonstrating to those at home that he had a capacity to carry on business and that his character was good. It means that the entire German population of the Northwest, if they so desired, might lead us to believe that they were no longer Germans, having become naturalized in Canada prior to 1915 and that, having made application to the German authorities at home they might become German citizens and entitled to all privileges of that nationality. Are these men to be entitled to vote, men whom we have thought to be British citizens but whose native country permits them at the same time to be German citizens? Are they to be entitled to the franchise at a trying time in the history of Canada and to be let cast a ballot when their brothers may be fighting against our men in Flanders, when their sentiment may be in favour of the early conclusion of the war, while the national sentiment of this country may be to carry it to a definite conclusion? That does not seem reasonable.

Mr. McKENZIE: To what class of citizens is the hon. member referring, the Germans in Ontario or in the West?

Mr. NICKLE: I am speaking on the general principles of nationality as applied to the Germans throughout the world. Apply it specifically or generally as you will.

Mr. GRAHAM: Is not the hon. gentleman's argument at variance with the promise of the Prime Minister to the hon. member for North Waterloo (Mr. Weichel) a few moments ago with regard to the naturalization of men in Ontario?

Mr. NICKLE: No. The policy of the Prime Minister, as I understood it, was that these people who had been in Canada for