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# The Woman's Page

## MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE MAKES CLEAR SOME OF OBSCURITIES IN WORKING OUT OF NATURALIZATION LAW

Mary P. McCallum, Associate Editor Grain Growers' Guide Takes  
Opposite View of Question of Personal Naturalization  
to That of Mrs. Root.

In our issue of February 28th, appeared an article by Mrs. Geo. F. Root, of Wetaskiwin, on the subject of "Personal Naturalization." The above mentioned article has received the attention of Mary P. McCallum, associate editor of the Grain Growers' Guide, who has written the editor of the Free Press as follows:

Dear Sir:  
I am enclosing herewith an article regarding "Personal Naturalization." I note that Mrs. Root of Wetaskiwin has written an article in your paper taking the opposite view of this question to what I do, and what the Council of Agriculture does. I believe her contention arises from an ignorance of the working out of this act in conjunction with the Elections Act which is likely to be passed at the session.

I would be glad if you would give this space in your paper. This is a very important question, and one in which, as Mrs. Root says, labor women are as much interested as farm women.

Yours very truly,

MARY P. McCALLUM.

Following is the article referred to in

the above letter:

(By Mary P. McCallum, Associate Editor Grain Growers' Guide)  
The recommendation of the Canadian Council of Agriculture that a new plank be added to the Farmers' Platform to the effect that all naturalization shall be by personal application only, seems to have met with general favor and approval. Occasionally one does hear a protest against the proposed plank however, but this arises from an ignorance of the present naturalization law and its working out rather than against the principle of personal naturalization.

This article is written for the purpose of making clear some of the obscurities in the working out of the act. The writer is a member of the Council of Agriculture and was in a measure responsible for the recommendation.

In 1914 a new naturalization act was passed which replaced the old act under which an alien might secure naturalization if he had resided in the country for three years and took the oath of allegiance before a commissioner of oaths. In 1919 the existing naturalization act was made to conform to the British Naturalization Act, and under it a person who has resided for five years in Canada, who is of good character, who has an adequate knowledge of French or English, who expects to reside for some time in His Majesty's Dominion, and who has satisfied the secretary of state of these qualifications may be naturalized, that naturalization to be effective throughout the whole British empire.

Naturalization falls into two classes, personally naturalized persons, and persons naturalized by operation of law. All persons who personally satisfy the secretary of state that they are qualified as above stated and receive a naturalization certificate are personally naturalized. Those persons who are naturalized by virtue of their relationship to a British subject, such as wives and minor children are naturalized by operation of law.

The act of 1919 it is true, has widely extended the classes of persons who may seek personal naturalization. But the act does not go far enough. The alien-born wives of British subjects may not receive personal naturalization papers. The only possible way in which they may become naturalized is by operation of law, that is through their marriage to naturalized British subjects. This cannot be discussed in its entirety without discussing enfranchisement and this will be done later in the article.

Under the clauses dealing with the national status of married women it is clearly explained that the wife of a British subject shall be deemed to be a British subject and that the wife of an alien shall be deemed to be an alien with three exceptions. The first exception is that the wife of an alien, that is a man who is not a British subject, may if she chooses take out personal naturalization papers. To do so she must have

the same qualifications as are required for a man who seeks naturalization. The second provision is that where a man has ceased to be a British subject his wife may declare that she wishes to remain a British subject and the secretary of state may grant her wish. The third provision is that if an alien be a subject of an enemy state, his wife, if she were at birth a British subject, may have a declaration that she desires to resume British nationality, and if the secretary of state is satisfied that such is desirable he may grant her a certificate of naturalization.

Some persons are under the impression that under the new act a British subject, if she marries an alien may choose and remain a British subject, and that an alien, when she marries a British subject may choose and remain an alien; that is, that women on their marriage to a man not of their own nationality may choose their nationality. Such is not the case, and what may be considered the only possible exception is the third provision which was quoted above.

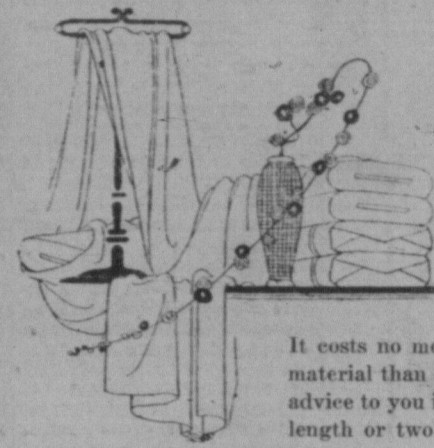
There is no provision for the personal naturalization of the alien born wives of British subjects. The act distinctly states that "Except as provided by this act a certificate of naturalization shall not be granted to any person under disability." The provisions or exceptions are quoted above, while "disability" is defined as meaning "the status of being a married woman, or a minor, lunatic or idiot."

It is impossible to discuss the effects of the proposed plank that all naturalization be a personal affair without at the same time considering the relationship to enfranchisement. The War Times Election Act ceased to be effective last summer. For the purpose of the by-elections which were held at the end of October, it was necessary to pass a special elections act to govern those by-elections. News dispatches and rumors of the new elections act which the speech from the throne promised at the present session of parliament indicate, almost beyond conjecture, that the new act will incorporate the features of the by-elections act. That act provides that all alien-born women who are the wives of British subjects, no matter how long they have resided in the country and no matter how long they have been naturalized citizens by operation of law, must personally appear before a judge of the district court and secure from him a certificate that they are qualified to take out naturalization papers were machinery and means provided for their doing so. When this is presented to the enumerator he may add their names to the voters' lists.

The plank that it is proposed to add to the platform asks that only personal naturalization shall obtain. Naturalization by operation of law, that is an automatic naturalization of women and minors on the taking out of naturalization papers by a husband or father is a special privilege. The proposed plank asks that all children not born in the British empire and all alien born women should take out personal naturalization papers.

Whether there are those who object to personal naturalization or not, citizens naturalized by operation of law, when they discover that such naturalization does not include the right to the franchise are themselves going to force the hand of the government to establish personal naturalization for all and so make that naturalization the basis for enfranchisement. The whole difficulty arises from the fact that qualification for naturalization and for enfranchisement are not the same. For women the anomalous position exists of being a British subject and yet of being refused the franchise on the ground that she

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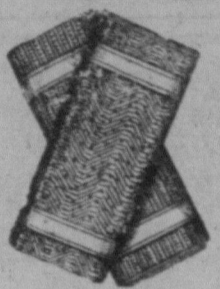


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may not be fully a British subject; for a woman who comes to this country from another today and marries a British subject tomorrow is on her marriage automatically a British subject, yet she may not vote until she can satisfy the secretary of state that she had resided in the country for five years, has an adequate knowledge of English or French, is of good character, etc. Then she does not get personal naturalization papers but a certificate stating that she had satisfied the judge of her qualifications for being added to the voters' list.

Granting the franchise to women has changed the entire aspect to the question of naturalization. It is proper that women should not vote until they have become qualified as men must. But it is equally fair that they should qualify as men do for naturalization. By making the qualifications for naturalization and enfranchisement the same all discrimination and unfairness is eliminated. To make a person a British subject and yet refuse that person what should be the inalienable right of every British subject to his or her franchise is surely not a fair proposal to the women who come to this country from other lands. Now much better than an alien born woman understand that when she has resided for five years in this country, has an adequate knowledge of English or French, is of good character, etc., that she may herself go to the judge of the court and receive from him after due procedure a personal certificate of naturalization which settles for all time to come her right to the franchise.

Objection has been made on the ground that it is no small inconvenience for many women to travel to the district court and make personal application for naturalization. It should be pointed out that if the features of the by-elections act are embodied in the new act, and there is every reason to believe that they will be, then the alien born wives of British subjects will have to appear personally before the judge to get his certificate that they may be added to the voters' lists, and after all that fuss they are not any more effectively naturalized than they were by operation of law. It is said also that naturalization in Canada now carries with it naturalization throughout the British empire and that this will cease to be of uniformity again. To make the plank effective throughout the British empire of course the parliament of Great Britain and those of the various dominions would have to enact similar legislation. However, we are trying to prove to ourselves and the world that Canada is an autonomous nation, and



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Who'll perform her tasks unending,  
Who will do the wash and mending,  
Give the kids the proper tending,  
Can you state?

When mother joins the union,  
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As a loyal union workman,  
She can't begin till eight.  
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All our pleas that we need feeding,  
Who will cook the grub we're needing?  
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