

*Citizenship*

of land. However, when we look at clause 33 we find the following:

33(1) Real and personal property of every description may be taken, acquired, held and disposed of by a person who is not a Canadian citizen in the same manner in all respects as by a Canadian citizen; and a title to real and personal property of every description may be derived through, from or in succession to a person who is not a Canadian citizen in the same manner in all respects as through, from or in succession to a Canadian citizen.

The only change in clause 33 in the old act is to change the word "aliens" to "persons not citizens". I am commenting on this clause because it has come to my attention that there have been meetings between federal and provincial officials that were set up after the first ministers' conference to study foreign ownership of land in Canada. In a confidential report it was recommended that the provinces be given the power to deal with non-resident ownership of land. I understand that a number of provinces have written to the federal government requesting that they be given this power, and the federal government has indicated that it is not prepared to move on the problem.

We have in clause 33, the property and citizenship clause, the same intent as the old act, allowing non-citizens to hold land unless that land has been set aside for Canadian citizens only under the terms of an act of the federal parliament. It is on this matter that I want to get clarification from the minister in committee. If the provinces are going to be thwarted in their attempt to regain control of provincial lands from foreign owners or to curtail foreigners from buying up recreational beaches and other prime land, and we have this clause 33, it could lead to very interesting legal interpretations and court cases by non-residents challenging provincial law. There is much danger in this clause, if it is what I think. That is why I want clarification on it from the minister in committee. Other than clause 33 and some of the provisions about qualifications for time and what can be counted as time of residence in Canada in order to qualify for the three-year period for citizenship, we think the bill is basically sound and worthy of support.

It has often been said that a nation can be defined as a group of people who have done great things together in the past and intend to do great things together in the future. No small part of that sense of nationhood, that sense of identity, unity, co-operation and accomplishment is the sense of citizenship. Citizenship gives a person a sense of belonging and participation, especially in regard to the most fundamental democratic right, that of voting. It also gives citizens a sense of obligation—to do their best to promote the well-being of their fellow citizens and their country.

● (1730)

For far too long we have had an identity crisis in Canada. We are not quite sure what it is to say, "I am a Canadian." Indeed, in the past many of the forms we have had to fill out in various areas of life have labelled us as British subjects or have said that our national origin had to be something other than Canadian. As we move toward this new Citizenship Act and the new concept of citizenship that is within it, we will find that there will result a greater realization of Canadian identity.

[Mr. Symes.]

For anyone who wants to experience what it means to be a Canadian, they should visit a citizenship court and watch the ceremony whereby new Canadians are finally recognized as citizens. I cannot think of a more impressive and moving ceremony than watching people from all lands throughout the world who qualify as Canadians standing to take the oath of allegiance and receiving their certificate as full fledged citizens of Canada. It is a most impressive sight, one I have witnessed on many occasions, and I commend it to all native-born Canadians.

In conclusion, we welcome Bill C-20 for its reform aspects. Except for clause 33, we think it is a good bill and we will promote its speedy passage through this parliament.

[Translation]

**Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I was highly interested by the minister's presentation, and the amendments proposed in Bill C-20. Amendments bringing the Act into line with this country's image are long overdue. The minister briefly outlined the history of our citizenship law, starting from the old Naturalization Act dating back to 1881. In 1914, Parliament passed the first Canadian Citizenship Act proper.

In 1946 came the new act as we now know it. It dropped the words "British Dominion". Although improved, the 1946 Canadian Citizenship Act was much more representative than the former one, although it still included a number of discrepancies that could no longer remain in 1975. The minister recognizes that privileges are no longer defensible, and we are most satisfied. From now on, Canadian citizenship will be a right for every one wishing to settle or remain in Canada. With the voting of this new Act, Canada will become more adult, more humane and more civilized.

What I was most interested in was the list the Minister gave us of amendments proposed in the bill. He said the bill introduces equality of treatment for women. I am convinced the Canadian people as a whole will thank the Minister for finally dropping such discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, it would be unworthy of the Canadian people if our immigration laws maintained different status for women.

As a second amendment, the Minister referred to the wife's residence where the husband is a Canadian citizen. The wife coming back to Canada would have only one year to wait before obtaining the right to citizenship.

The greatest change brought about by the Minister is with regard to minors, enabling the parent to speak on behalf of his or her minor child. This is quite logical. Equality of status having been declared between man and woman, it was quite normal for minors that they also have the same privilege, having reached the age of 18.

A few years ago, the minimum voting age was lowered to 18 and, in my opinion, this amendment is quite logical. It is quite normal to want to give the status of major to an 18-year-old child, whereas he was recognized as such only when older under former legislation.

With regard to children born in a foreign country, in order for them to become Canadian citizens, be they born in or out of wedlock, it will always be the parent who is