



# REFERENCE PAPERS

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## CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP WEEK

Residents of Canada, both native-born and naturalized, will soon have the right to designate themselves Canadian citizens. It is a privilege the Canadian people have never before had in the 79 years since the articles of Confederation created the national entity of Canada.

To mark the establishment and recognition of Canadian citizenship, which comes into force by an Act of Parliament on January 1st, 1947, the Department of the Secretary of State is organizing a "Canadian Citizenship Week". During this period, from January 5 to January 11, events will be arranged on a nation-wide scale to inaugurate the new citizenship ceremonies provided for in the Act. The primary aim of the program now being drawn up will be to deepen the national consciousness of what it means to be a Canadian citizen.

Prior to the passing of the Canadian Citizenship Act there were three main statutes which dealt with questions of nationality or citizenship. The existence of these was the result of historical development and was due in part to the fact that, along with other peoples of the British Commonwealth and Empire, Canadians possessed the common status of British subjects. The new Act removes the complexities in previous legislation and achieves a clear definition of citizenship.

The inception of Canadian citizenship implies much more than a simple change in terminology. It represents the stage that Canadians generally have reached where, in the form of a legal enactment, they want an undoubted right to be able to call themselves Canadian citizens. For Canada, January 1, 1947 will be not only an important occasion for individuals, but an event of great significance in the country's history.

In the early days of the older provinces, naturalization could be conferred only by a private act of the provincial legislatures. After the signing of Confederation in 1867 general acts relating to naturalization were passed. The first general Federal Act dealing with the subject was in the early 1880's and it remained in force for several decades. It conferred on the holder of a certificate the status of a British subject only within Canada.

The Naturalization Act of 1914, which was similar in terms to an act passed in the United Kingdom and in others of the self-governing Dominions, conferred on the holder of a certificate the status of British subject which was recognized in all British territories beyond Canada.

In 1921 the Canadian Nationals Act was passed to distinguish nationals of Canada from those of other parts of the Commonwealth who shared the status of British subjects.

The Immigration Act concerned itself in some part with citizenship, but only for the purposes of immigration. It defined citizenship