

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): Including myself.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, and the hon. member is an ornament to this House of Commons. I have great respect for the hon. member for Skeena. He is a good Canadian and I think he deserves great credit.

The census of 1931 shows that we had 507,724 aliens resident in Canada, making a total of more than 1,000,000 foreign-born residents in Canada, the exact figures being 1,122,695. Each year the number is increased. The Canada Year Book for 1940 shows, at page 1070, that in the fiscal year 1938 we acquired by naturalization 27,455 new Canadian citizens, and in the fiscal year 1939, 21,418. As I have said, naturalization is of the greatest importance to Canada.

I think every member of the house will admit that by our methods of naturalization we set for the applicant our standard of citizenship. If our standard is low—I repeat that—if our standard of citizenship is low—and I suggest that judged in this way it is low—how can we expect the applicant for naturalization to place a high value on Canadian citizenship?

I am convinced that there are different ways in which our naturalization methods in Canada could be improved, and I propose to suggest several ways for the consideration of the committee which is to be set up this year. Of course, I do not pretend that these are all the ways or the best ways, but I think they are worthy of consideration.

My first suggestion is that the Canadian government should provide for naturalization schools and for naturalization textbooks. This would have to be done in collaboration with the provincial governments, and I think it could be done if the federal government made up its mind that such a step was necessary. If it were done, applicants for naturalization could learn something of the history of Canada, something of our institutions, something of the ideals of the Canadian people. Let us make such knowledge the basis for granting citizenship in this nation of Canada. At the present time all the knowledge that an applicant must have is an adequate knowledge of English or French, and that provision is interpreted in such a way that he does not even need to be able to read either English or French. All he has to do, according to the memorandum issued by the department, is to be able to make himself understood in either language. That is our present standard of citizenship in this country.

Next I suggest that naturalization judges should be given wider powers. At present [Mr. Green.]

they can ask only perfunctory questions. Everyone practising law will admit, I think, that the naturalization courts are really naturalization mills. Applicants are crowded in and go through in a jam. There is not the slightest possible chance given to a judge to get down to the real merits of whether or not an applicant is entitled to our citizenship. Give to these judges across Canada, who, after all, are the best people to decide the question, power to question the applicant thoroughly. Make arrangements so that the evidence taken can be kept on record. It is not even kept on record at the present time. Let the judges have a copy, in advance of the hearing, of the confidential report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

As a third suggestion, should we not provide for a more definite declaration of the intention of the applicant for naturalization? Let us investigate most carefully the question whether he has a dual loyalty, whether he is going to be not only a citizen of Canada but also a citizen of some other nation. In other words, is he giving up his former nationality when he assumes our nationality? In some of the provinces, in my own province of British Columbia certainly, that is a most important question.

Another suggestion I would make is that we have a dignified ceremony before a judge when the oath of allegiance is taken by the applicant. After he has been approved by the judge and after his application has been approved by the Secretary of State, let us have a dignified ceremony before a judge in the community in which the applicant resides and in the presence of the leading citizens of that community. Let the oath of allegiance be taken under such conditions, and let the naturalization certificate be presented to the applicant at that ceremony.

How do we carry out the procedure at present? We could not do it more in mail-order fashion than we do at the present time. The Department of the Secretary of State sends a blank oath of allegiance form to the applicant after he has been approved for citizenship. The applicant then goes to the nearest notary public, commissioner or justice of the peace, writes out the oath of allegiance, signs it and swears to it before the official, and sends it back to Ottawa. Then, by post also, he gets his naturalization certificate, which is his admission to citizenship in Canada and to citizenship in the British empire. I suggest that this is a most out-of-date method of doing things.

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): If my hon. friend will allow me, before the Secretary of State