

ical; no law enacted at any time should conflict with any other recognized law on our statute book. The naturalization law of this country, and, I think, of very other British country, states very definitely—and the principle has been recognized for many years—that the wife of a British subject is herself a British subject. Then, we have in the law which I am now critising, the clause by which it is proposed to enact that the wife of a British subject is not, in certain cases, a British subject. I contend, Sir, that the two laws are absolutely contradictory and that the only way in which the difficulty may be composed and the differences reconciled is to strike out the provision which is in conflict with the old recognized British law. In the past, married women of whatever origin, whether of alien origin, native born, or born in other parts of the British Empire, lived in Canada on terms of absolute equality so far as citizenship was concerned. I know whereof I speak. In the community from which I come we have, as is well known, many women of alien origin—and I am not now referring only to those of former enemy alien origin. Their husbands were naturalized; they all lived together in harmony, none having a feeling of superiority over the others; none having a feeling of inferiority. I say, Sir, that it was a most desirable condition and one that ought to be continued in this country. But if this clause is passed in its present form, the condition of equality, and, necessarily, the feeling of equality, that exists among those people will be destroyed. The fact that the franchise is now conferred upon women is no reason why that equality should be destroyed. I contend, Sir, that the clause should be struck from the Bill; only if that is done will the Franchise Bill be placed squarely upon the basis of citizenship, as it ought to be. I admit that it may be desirable that women of alien birth should also show themselves worthy of naturalization and receive personal naturalization, as I said the other day. I believe that it is right, when both sexes are placed upon an equality with regard to the franchise, that they should receive their rights and privileges as men do. But when I made this suggestion the other day the Minister of Justice (Mr. Doherty) stated that it was impossible to place in the Bill a clause under which married women of alien birth could receive personal naturalization papers. If the Naturalization Act were amended in that way I believe it would be a proper course. But we have the law as it

[Mr. Euler.]

stands to-day, and I submit that it would not be just to make that law retroactive and to place certain men and certain women in this country in a class by themselves,—which necessarily carries with it some feeling of inferiority, or at least places these people on a different basis of citizenship from that of their more favored sisters or brothers.

Mr. CURRIE: May I put a question to my hon. friend? About ten years ago a law was passed in the German Empire, which, briefly stated, meant "once a German always a German," regardless of any naturalization papers the German might take out anywhere else. A law of that kind used to be in force in Great Britain many years ago; it permitted people to have a dual naturalization. Has the hon. member any reason to believe that that law has been withdrawn in Germany?

Mr. EULER: As a matter of fact I do not know whether there is such a law in Germany or not. I am told that it applies in France as well. I would point out that if such a law exists it certainly was not enacted by the people of whom I speak; they had absolutely nothing to do with it. I suppose what my hon. friend means to imply is that these people should never be allowed the franchise in Canada—which is surely an unthinkable condition.

Now, I say that the law should not be made retroactive. If you make it retroactive, men who in the past have voted, even during the time of war, will be taken out of the class of voters and will be obliged to go before a judge and to prove that they are worthy of citizenship. I say that that should not be done. You also place the same disability upon women who are not of enemy alien countries. The House is apt to assume that the plea is made entirely on behalf of people of former enemy origin. I am free to say that the provision affects that class of women in the constituency which I represent, but I think it should be also borne in mind that it places under this disability not only women who were born in Germany and who are now British subjects; not only women who were born in Austria; but also women of France, of Belgium, and of Italy. It places under this disability men who have voted in past years, and places them under the necessity of appearing before a judge. In a practical way, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the enactment of this law will result in the disfranchisement of a good many British subjects. These people will be to some