

Canadian Citizenship Act

the occasions when these ceremonies take place are by and large under jurisdictions other than the immediate jurisdiction of the federal government, but I still think that something can be done and no effort should be overlooked in trying to impress upon local communities and the courts, which are the agents of the government in that respect, the desirability of a solemn and suitable ceremony when citizenship is granted.

Anything that we on this side can do to assist in this effort by our speeches in the house and out of it or in any other way, by making suggestions to the government and to local organizations, I can assure the minister and the house we will be glad to do because I think this should be a co-operating effort, not a competitive one. In that spirit we are glad to see these further housekeeping improvements which will better facilitate the application for and the granting of citizenship.

Mr. R. R. Knight (Saskatoon): Mr. Speaker, I should like to corroborate what has just been said by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton). In our city we have been fortunate in having one or two of these ceremonies which I think have had a considerable amount of success. We have an active citizenship council in that city. That reminds me that this very month—I think on the 18th—we are to have another one of these ceremonies to which I was pleased to be invited but which I cannot attend. One of the features of these ceremonies is that people are invited in a spirit of friendliness. They are brought to the attention of the community and the community feels some responsibility for their treatment. On that basis I am sorry that I am obliged to raise a grievance in connection with this particular matter. I have found the minister himself to be extremely co-operative when I have drawn to his attention one or two cases of what I have called injustice and he has remedied it. But I think this one is important enough that it should have some public notice and discussion. I am referring now to a proposal that I would have by which there should be some amendment of or some addition to one of the clauses of the Citizenship Act. I have noted here subsection 6 of section 110. I should like to state this case briefly and to suggest to the minister that something might be done.

Mr. Pickersgill: Did the hon. gentlemen mention section 110?

Mr. Knight: I have it noted as subsection 6 of section 110.

Mr. Pickersgill: There appear to be only 44 sections in the act.

[Mr. Fulton.]

Mr. Knight: I may have been mistaken in the number. In any case we can easily identify the section. I could do it here in a minute if I had time to look at these notes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. For my benefit might I ask the hon. member to identify the clause to which he intends to refer as one which is now being amended because, as he well realizes, it is the principle of the amending bill with which we are dealing.

Mr. Knight: Yes. It is subsection 6 of section 10. I was in error. It is subsection 6 of section 10 of the act. I think it could be related to a clause in this particular bill.

Mr. Knowles: Section 10 of the act is being amended by this bill.

Mr. Knight: Yes. The question is this. This is the case of a British subject who came to this country. As a matter of fact, he is a Scot. He came to this country and after five years he would automatically be qualified for Canadian citizenship. He was here for five years and then he made his application. He sent in his fee, whatever that may be,—I think it is \$10—and obtained a receipt for it. I am not sure what he said in that first letter, but at any rate he was informed by the department that his citizenship could not be granted because he had been out of the country for some seven months. He wrote back and explained why he was out of the country. He had been out of the country because he had been in the employment of the government of Canada, or of one of the provincial governments. He had also been directly under the sponsorship of the dominion government which had shared in the giving of a scholarship to this man in order that he might improve himself in his profession, which has something to do with the medical profession. At any rate he was informed that he could not have his citizenship.

The point that I want to make and the point that I made as I rose is this. It is important that these people should be made welcome in the country, that there should be a feeling of cordiality,—and I am sure the minister would agree with me—a feeling that we are glad to get these people into the country, that we are glad to welcome them here and to make it easy for them. I do not know what the disposition of this man is, but at any rate he certainly felt a sense of injustice having regard to the way in which he had been treated.

His main complaint was this. In the first place, his citizenship was not granted to him when he made the application. The department contended that he had not thoroughly explained the reason for his temporary absence from this country. I shall say this.