



REFERENCE PAPERS

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 7

December 16, 1946.

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

simply as a means of describing the persons who would be deemed to have a right of entry to Canada.

Thus the Naturalization Act, while it defined a "British subject" contained no definition of a "Canadian citizen"; The Canadian Nationals Act defined a Canadian Citizen in terms of the Immigration Act, but was not effective as it included certain classes of persons who were not Canadian citizens under the Immigration Act. The Immigration Act defined Canadian citizen, but limited the effect of the definition to the purposes of immigration. Consequently there was no general definition of Canadian citizenship for all purposes. The new Citizenship Act meets this long-felt need.

To launch Citizenship Week there will be a ceremony in the Supreme Court at Ottawa on January 3rd in which representative new Canadians will receive certificates of citizenship. Candidates on this occasion will represent the different provinces and the various ethnic groups of the Dominion. For the ceremony, which will be the first of a country-wide series, Justices of the Supreme Court will be in attendance and other officials will be on hand. Chief Justice Rinfret will administer the Oath of Allegiance and Prime Minister Mackenzie King will welcome the new citizens. This Ottawa ceremony will be broadcast over the national network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and both motion picture and still cameras will be used to record the event.

During the week public presentations of certificates are planned at similar ceremonies in principal cities across Canada, including Charlottetown, Fredericton, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, and Victoria. These ceremonies will be organized by local committees working under the direction of the provincial authorities, mayors and other officials. While the principal feature of these ceremonies will be the presentation of certificates of Canadian citizenship to new citizens; it is hoped through them to emphasize to all Canadians the implications of the Oath of Allegiance, and the responsibilities which flow from it.

The new Oath of Allegiance reads: "I swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George the Sixth, his heirs and successors, according to law, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen. So help me God."

Both during Citizenship Week and afterwards considerable importance is to be attached to the ceremonies in which citizenship certificates are presented, since it is felt that such rites, if properly arranged, can do much to point up the importance of the occasion. An outline of a simple and dignified ceremony has been prepared for such occasions as a suggested pattern. This ceremony includes a civic reception of a friendly and informal nature where officials of governments, churches, schools and community organizations will meet and welcome the new Canadians.

In promoting the Citizenship Week the help of national, provincial and community groups, the churches, service clubs, women's organizations, educational bodies, press and radio organizations is being sought. All are asked to help create a greater consciousness of the responsibilities of citizenship in the Dominion.

In asking for this cooperation, Secretary of State Paul Martin said "The Canadian Citizenship Act has a far broader significance than most of us realize. At a time when the nations of the world are striving to set up an organization which will be a world-wide guarantee of peace and security, we here present an example of how each may preserve the uniqueness of our individual nationhood within the framework of common

ideals and loyalty to free institutions. Although heretofore the separate status of the Dominions within the British Commonwealth was fully recognized, it will be on January 1st, 1947, through the medium of the Canadian Citizenship Act, that we will have the full legal right to call ourselves Canadian citizens, retaining the status of British subjects."

An invitation has been extended to the heads of all religious bodies in the Dominion to lend their support to the nation-wide observation of Citizenship Week and in response to this invitation the religious leaders of Canada have pledged their whole-hearted support of the plan.

It is expected that educational organizations in Canada will cooperate by stressing the obligations of citizenship and its foundations. In cities where ceremonies are to be held, citizens' committees are being formed to assist in arrangements and to enlist the support of every section of civic life. Service clubs and other organizations are being asked to make the theme of their activities during the week - "the meaning of Canadian citizenship."

When the Canadian Citizenship Act comes into force, native-born Canadians or British subjects domiciled in Canada, foreign-born brides of Canadian ex-servicemen and residents possessing naturalization certificates will be declared Canadian citizens immediately. Citizenship papers will be granted British subjects after they have established legal residence. Thereafter all Canadian passports will carry the designation "Canadian Citizen".

The Act states that a Canadian woman will have the right to retain Canadian nationality even though she marries a man of another nationality. Women marrying Canadian citizens qualify for citizenship within a year of becoming residents as do non-Canadians who served in the Canadian forces outside the country.

Although the Act makes citizenship available to those who previously entered Canada as immigrants it has no effect on existing immigration regulations. As far as this Act is concerned, Canadian immigration laws remain unchanged.

Provision is made in the Act for encouragement of education in citizenship for those applying for naturalization, and the Secretary of State is given the responsibility of seeing that adequate facilities are available for this purpose. A concerted effort will be made to acquaint new citizens with the significance of the step they are taking and the responsibilities inherent in their new status.

The Secretary of State has recommended that citizenship ceremonies similar to those of Citizenship Week be held on specific dates in February, June and October each year. He hopes that on these dates ceremonies will be arranged by civic and community bodies in cities all across Canada. He has pointed out also that every year some 200,000 young Canadians come of voting age and that it would be fitting to have some recognition made of this important event in their lives.

In ensuring that adequate preparation is provided for persons applying for citizenship the Federal Government is obtaining the cooperation of adult education bodies. The Provincial governments have already indicated their interest in the Canadian Citizenship program, and night classes for persons applying for citizenship papers have been started in many cities. A manual for new citizens is under preparation, and a copy of it will be given to each applicant. Assistance in creating an appreciation of what it means to be a citizen of Canada is to be given by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board and the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, through film and radio programs.

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...