

AS TO LOYALTY.

Doubtless the resolution passed the other day by the Winnipeg Board of Trade advocating the disfranchisement of naturalized aliens until their respective countries of origin relinquish all rights of citizenship over them was prompted by the best and highest motives. For all that, its wisdom and that of many other suggestions now being put forward regarding the immigrant population may be considered doubtful.

With regard to the Board of Trade's resolution, the principal point about it is its futility. The object of the policy advocated is obviously to induce certain European countries to abandon any civil or political claims upon their emigrating population. Would the placing by Canada of civil disabilities upon such immigrants induce the European Governments in question to relinquish their claims? Would it not rather achieve one of the very objects which have moved these Governments to assert them?

For while the view may be honestly held that the chief object of these claims is to maintain centres of nationalist agitation in the countries to which European population emigrate, most immigration agents, we think, would take the view that the chief object is to prevent emigration from the European countries in question. Is it desirable that European Governments should be assisted in keeping immigrants out of Canada?

Moreover, the Governments in question are not solely those of our enemies. The Russian Government pre-eminently asserts this claim of indefeasible citizenship. It is true that by means of a petition to the Czar a Russian subject may obtain release from Russian citizenship, but practically not a single Russian coming to Canada secures such a release. The way of the petition is long and expensive.

A supporter of the resolution in question is reported as having explained his position by saying "that there had been abundance of evidence for some time past to show how cheaply citizenship was prized by vast numbers of foreigners coming into Canada, and pointed out that no one should have a voice in the government of this country until complete satisfaction had been established as to their loyalty."

With any and every attempt to assist the foreign population to an appreciation of Canadian ideals and to an understanding of the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship in a free democracy there must necessarily be the widest sympathy. There is a great need for sympathetic education of the foreign population, because it has by the very nature of the situation, lacked opportunities to understand and appreciate the ways and methods of British communities.

But the situation hardly merits a general suggestion of disloyalty against the foreign population. It is true that there have been some very regrettable happenings in Canada since the war broke out; and some grievous disappointments in the attitude and conduct of non-English-speaking citizens long in this country. Yet, taking all this fully into consideration, there is no evidence that the bulk of our non-English-speaking population, either on the land or in the towns, has acted disloyally or harbored disloyal intentions.

In considering this matter of loyalty, it might be well to remember the anti-British movement in the Province of Quebec prior to the last General Election. The agitation, as everyone knows, was largely financed by good (sic) English-speaking citizens and by good (sic) English-speaking newspaper organs. And on the part of thousands of Canadians of prominence and responsibility, who knew exactly what was going on, there was a masterful and eloquent silence.

One could pursue this theme, unfortunately, much further. Loyalty, super-loyalty in fact, was the stock-in-trade for long weary years in this Province of politicians whose moral depravity is still, after months of sensations, a source of amazement

and consternation. Yet this regime, whose record it seems impossible even to touch without loosing a Pandora's box of evil, was supported year in and year out by a large number of our supposedly best citizens.

Bearing these things in mind—not to speak of the distressing revelations of graft and scandal in connection with war supplies—it is easier to be charitable to our foreign-born population.