

## ENEMY ALIENS AND THE FRANCHISE.

Editor of The Star: With much of your attitude, as revealed in leading articles and editorials, I am strongly in sympathy. I have for years believed with many others that the true patriotic position for every citizen to take, either in war or peace, was the judicial one, studying every situation on its own merits, and refusing solid allegiance to either party all the time, but voting and influencing as seems right at the time. When the majority of our citizens cannot be counted on by either party as a "dyed-in-the-wool," a new day will dawn in Canadian politics, and politicians will find it is necessary to act more like statesmen.

I am at a loss, however, to understand your attitude with respect to the Dominion franchise at this time, if that attitude is revealed in letter of your Ottawa correspondent in Saturday's issue.

That letter said that Premier Borden has stated that naturalized citizens of Canada, born in enemy countries, will not be conscripted. Why, then, should they be allowed to vote in an election which is primarily to decide the question of conscription? With the evidence clearly seen everywhere that the educated German, even if he has left Germany for greater liberty, still (naturally enough) retains his secret allegiance to the land of his birth, how can he expect that Canada will put into his hands at this time the opportunity to register his vote against the sending of men to defeat his Fatherland?

You may say that he will have no such opportunity, that in the ridings where there are most enemy aliens the candidates of both parties will be for conscription. What is to prevent an independent running on a platform of "no conscription," getting the solid foreign vote, while the British vote is split between the regular candidates?

With a solid Quebec against conscription, the rest of Canada cannot afford to have any anti-conscriptionists in the new Parliament.

I do not think that naturalized citizens of enemy country birth should be badly treated, and considering the bitterness of this terrible war, I do not think Canada has treated them badly at all. I would restore to them the franchise a year or two after the war ceases.

But in war-time, the right to vote implies also the liability to military service, and there are only two sane courses to pursue with regard to naturalized Canadians born in enemy countries:

First course—Allow them to continue to vote, and include them in the operation of the Military Service Act.

Second course—Disfranchise them till a year or so after the war, and exempt them from military service.

I am in favor of the second course.

Already the returned soldiers are embittered against the alien vote in politics, and if this vote is allowed to hold up reinforcements for the men at the front, the politicians responsible will feel their just indignation.

F. J. MACNAMARA.

Toronto, July 31, 1917.