
LOYALTY AND THE FRANCHISE.

It is suggested by The Saskatoon Phoenix, which has given consistent support to Union Government, that the Canadian Administration should follow the example of the United States Congress and "minimize the permanent evil effects of the War-time Elections Act" by adopting legislation to exclude certain of the foreign-born population from classification as enemy aliens. The Phoenix maintains that there are "not less than half a million of our population coming under the class of enemy aliens, Ukrainians from Galicia, Bohemians, Jews, Poles, who are at heart and in purpose with us in this war, and who earnestly hope for complete victory over the Central Powers so that their own countries may be permitted to enjoy national freedom and realize on the principle of self-determination."

Our Western contemporary anticipates a demand for the repeal of the War-time Elections Act when Parliament meets. It points out that many Unionist members could not consistently oppose such a demand. It suggests, as an alternative proposal, the recognition of the loyalty of men of enemy alien origin who come within the scope of the new political bodies, the new independent States, such as the Ukraine, Bohemia, and Poland. It believes that "such legislation would be reaching out the hand of friendship to the new-born States, and, at the same time, help to a solution of an ugly problem created by the War-time Elections Act."

Parliament will be well advised to give this whole question of franchise its serious, just and dispassionate attention. The Globe does not propose to defend the attitude of certain naturalized citizens of alien enemy birth or descent in relation to the war and Canada's stake in the struggle. There have been too many evidences of a spirit hostile to the supreme purpose of a patriotic people. Self-preservation, and the determination that national service and sacrifice shall not be in vain, justify the taking of necessary steps to negative the influence and operations of those residents who do not share the aspirations and resolute convictions of Canadians. For those who are not with us must be against us.

But to disfranchise citizens by the wholesale without clear cause is not in accord with Canadian principles and British justice. That was the wrong of the War-time Elections Act. And in so far as that wrong can be righted, it should be righted.
