

# FRANCHISE ACT FIGHT BEGINS; LIBERALS SEE MOVE TO ROB FOREIGN-BORN OF THE VOTE

**Government Makes One  
Concession Regarding  
Wives and Children of  
Naturalized Subjects, but  
Will Go No Farther**

**HON. MR. GUTHRIE  
MAKES REFUSAL**

**Claim Made That in Mont-  
real Alone 10,000 Per-  
sons Will be Without  
Franchise — Protests by  
Mr. Euler of North  
Waterloo**

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

Ottawa, May 6.—The battle is on in the Commons on clause 29 of the Franchise Act. Upon this section, which disfranchises by the thousands alien-born residents of Canada, the real fight on the new election law is to take place.

Practically all the non-contentious clauses of the bill have been passed.

The disfranchising section, together with a few other controversial clauses, has been held over until the last.

Both Unionists and Liberals look upon this section of the bill as the pivotal clause. The Government gracefully made one concession to the Liberals by way of an amendment, claiming that it was in line with their intentions, which had been improperly expressed in the original clause. But they have gone as far as it is politically safe for them to go, and farther than many of their followers desire. Therefore, when W. D. Euler, Liberal member for North Waterloo, moved an amendment this afternoon to entirely strike out the objectionable clause, instead of amending it, as proposed by the Government, Mr. Guthrie promptly refused to have anything to do with the proposal. "The bill meets the view of the Government, the amendment I read meets the view of the Government, and in that way we desire it to pass," he said.

**Must Get Certificate.**

The debate continued all afternoon, but was adjourned at six o'clock because of an arrangement to take up Department of Marine estimates at night. The original clause would have disfranchised wives and children who had become naturalized by operation of law through the husbands and fathers becoming British subjects. The Government amendment removes that disability, although such persons will be obliged to secure from a Judge a certificate of naturalization which will permit them to vote. Mr. Euler's amendment would do away with the requirement of such a certificate. He also urged that Canadian naturalization be granted to aliens who had lived in Canada for ten or twenty years, but who neglected to secure naturalization papers before the war. Otherwise they will have to wait until ten years from the date of issuance of the peace proclamation before being naturalized. This proposal was put forth because the Government contends that under agreement with the British Government it is impossible to grant Imperial naturalization, except under the terms of the Naturalization Act.

The Liberals are convinced the Government's desire is to disfranchise at the next election as many as possible of the foreign-born. This opinion was strengthened to-day, when Hon. Mr. Guthrie made no answer to a challenge of S. W. Jacobs to deny that that was the Government's intention.

**Fear the Women.**

"I think the Government is allowing the Naturalization Act in this case because it is afraid of the women who are prevented from voting," said Hon. Jacques Bureau, Three Rivers. "If we are afraid of the female franchise, let us be manly enough to cut it out."

Lucien Cannon, Dorchester, asked if the Government was going to say contracts made with people would not be respected. It had been the practise that a woman married to a British subject needed no naturalization certificate. She was naturalized by operation of the law. It was not a fair legal proposition to say on the one hand that a woman was a British subject, enjoying all the privileges of British citizenship, and on the other hand to say that, notwithstanding that British citizenship, she will not be allowed to vote. He believed the clause had been framed to suit the interests of a small section.

"This piece of legislation is without a parallel," he declared. Mr. Cannon suggested that the clause disqualifying wives and children of enemy aliens, except under a Judge's certificate, should be struck out in-

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instead of being amended, and that a clause should also be added which would permit people to vote who had lived in Canada for many years, but who are now disqualified because they technically failed to become naturalized before the war. Such a clause could be introduced in the same way that the amendment had been passed giving the vote to Indian war veterans.

## Don't Understand Distinction.

W. D. Euler, North Waterloo, said that in a measure the amendment proposed by Mr. Guthrie met the views he formerly expressed to the House. Great doubt existed as to what the clause and the amendment meant, and he ventured to think that 90 per cent. of the members did not thoroughly understand the distinction drawn.

"The whole difficulty arises from the fact that an attempt is made to go in direct contradiction to a law already on the statute books. When the Government proposed to eliminate the difficulties it did so not by attempting to remove the clause, but by trying to reconcile two irreconcilable things. Under the naturalization law we say that the wife of a British subject is a British subject; in this proposed law we say that she is not a British subject."

Mr. Euler moved an amendment to the amendment, that paragraph two of the clause dealing with the disqualifying of wives and children of **enemy aliens** except under a Judge's certificate should be struck out.

## Affect 10,000 persons.

S. W. Jacobs (George Etienne Cartier) said that the clause would affect 10,000 persons in Montreal. "The object of this clause is for the purpose of preventing as many as possible of the foreign-born voting at the next election," he declared. "I challenge the Solicitor-General to say that it is for any other object."

Answering criticisms raised by Levi Thomson (Qu'Appelle) and J. F. Johnston (Last Mountain) as to the difficulty it would be for country women to travel to the town or city to get the certificate from the Judges, Mr. Guthrie said the Judges would be obliged to hear applications wherever made in their districts. As the clause and the amendment had the approval of the Government, he would not accept Mr. Euler's amendment. The text of the certificate to be issued would be slightly amended to make it clear.

D. D. McKenzie urged the Government not to carry the war spirit into times of peace. He objected that the clause did not define the grounds on which certificates of naturalization should be issued, and also said that Judges would be pretty hard worked if they had to issue certificates to all applicants.

## Talked of in Caucus.

At a caucus of the Liberal members to-day a sub-committee was appointed for the purpose of considering whether it would be advisable to offer an amendment to the Franchise Act when it is getting the third reading. If it is so decided an amendment along lines found advisable will be drawn up. The caucus did not last long, as most of the members had work on the various committees meeting at the time. The discussion was afterwards duplicated in the House.