

NATURALIZATION LAW IS CHANGED

Status of Citizenship of the British Empire is Estab- lished

REFORM WAS MUCH NEEDED

Requires Qualification of One Year's Residence in United Kingdom

By Canadian Press.

London, Jan. 5.—A new law of naturalization came into operation on January 1st, and there was established for the first time the status of citizenship of the British Empire.

"It is a step," says The Times, "which we welcome with peculiar satisfaction, seeing that we have urged it in these columns for years. Hitherto, so far as naturalization was concerned, Imperial unity meant nothing. The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914, the main provisions of which we have already mentioned, now effects the change that has long been desired.

Affects Canada.

"As Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out at the Imperial Conference in 1911, when reform in this direction was originally discussed, Americans who entered Canada and became British subjects under letters of naturalization were deemed to be American citizens if they landed in England. Similar anomalies existed in other parts of the Empire, particularly in South Africa. There, if a naturalized British subject of Cape Colony went to the Transvaal or to Natal, he was regarded as an alien; and, if he tried in despair to fall back on the country of his birth, that country refused to have anything to do with him on the ground that he had become a British subject. Thus legislative incongruities led in some cases to the extinction of nationality and to the loss of the privileges it confers.

Grievance Now Removed.

"This grievance is now removed, and a step, which seems curiously belated has been taken to provide, as Lord Emmott said in introducing the bill in Parliament, for a 'a system of Imperial naturalization on a uniform and definite basis throughout the whole Empire.' The Naturalization Act of 1870, required a qualification of five years' residence in the United Kingdom; any period of residence in a British colony did not count. Henceforth, the residential qualification will be five years anywhere in a British Dominion, provided that the applicant for a certificate in this country has spent the year immediately preceding naturalization in the United Kingdom. The Act does not, of course, take away or abridge any power vested in the Legislature of any British possession, but it is to be presumed that, in the spirit of the agreement reached at the Imperial Conference of 1911, all parts of the Empire concerned have expressed their readiness to recognize that the new statute has been 'so framed as to enable each self-governing Dominion to adopt it.'"