

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP.

Recent phenomena in this province have revealed to us with something of a shock the weakness, or, better said, the entire lack, of Canadian national feeling existing in certain quarters. It is not necessary to review the remarkable articles which have recently appeared in a portion of the non-English press of this city, for to any truly patriotic Canadian they do not make pleasant reading.

But it can be said with truth that the writers of the articles in question were obviously and evidently unseized of the fact that their publications were appearing in any particular nation or in any country whose nationality it was at all incumbent upon them to acknowledge and respect.

That is the crux of the situation. It was not so much the publication of treasonable and anti-Canadian articles, painful as that was, as the revelation which such publication afforded to the mental attitude of the writers towards Canadian nationality. It is quite evident that the editors of the non-English publications in question were themselves quite surprised and sharply challenged. They clearly imagined that Canada was some sort of indefinite frontier country or some sort of mining camp where each nationality was a law unto itself.

Undoubtedly we are all responsible for this state of things, but there are those who are particularly responsible for it. A good deal has been said already in this connection and more will be said about it at the proper moment, but that moment is not just now. When normal times come again we shall have to examine anew the whole foundations of our nationhood and lay heavy hands upon those who for personal profit or aggrandisement are prepared to endanger and wreck the structure which has been so laboriously built up.

In one important direction much can be done at once. The duties of citizenship can be taught much more efficiently and effectively in our public schools than is the case at present. It is pleasing to note that a beginning has been made, but vigorous prosecution of the subject will have to be taken in hand. We do not mean that our British and Canadian history, as such, must be taught, or that such events as the struggle on the Plains of Abraham must be emphasized. There are things which it is more important to impress at the present stage of our development.

What is chiefly needed is to teach our boys and girls, as best may be, that we are here together, several nationalities, all working for the common end of building up a new and better nation, and that that new nation is to be Scotch, or Irish, or German, or Polish, or French, or anything else, but Canadian.

Our school children must be taught to recognize and respect the democratic commonwealth of Canada, in other words to respect the simple values of truth, justice, honor, unselfishness, etc., not so much in relation to those intangible entities, but in relation to our common everyday life, in connection with our dealing one with another, in home, factory, office, streets, public places and wherever we meet together.

And more than this we must teach them that the administration of public affairs is in reality and in essence nothing more than having dealings one with another under certain special conditions. Let us try to make our younger generation see the implications of political corruption. Is it not our duty to make them understand that the man who sells his vote also sells himself and his nation?

Such training should be given not only to the children. A large number of people eligible for the franchise have come here as adults. Under the new naturalization law such immigrants must have a knowledge either of English or French before they can become Canadian citizens. This, surely, is an obligation upon our schools to provide opportunities for the teaching of these languages. At the same time can there not be inculcated in the minds of the responsibility incumbent upon assuming Canadian citizen-