

INTERN THEM, IF DISLOYAL, BUT LEAVE LOYAL A VOTE

Sidelights on the Debate Over Naturalized Subjects—Why
Controller Cameron Didn't Vote—Is Naturalization Con-
tract to Be Regarded as a "Scrap of Paper?"

Ald. Singer's "alien enemy" speech in Council yesterday is to-day the topic of conversation at the City Hall. After Council adjourned, a procession of aldermen, including many who had voted against him, tendered him congratulations. His frank declaration that he is himself of enemy origin, though thirty years a British subject, added to the dramatic impression of his plea for the triumph of British justice. His colleagues know that he is loyal to the core, and some of his opponents were rather shamefaced after their vote of yesterday.

Are Liable To Service.

Ald. Singer's argument against the disfranchisement of naturalized British subjects who happen to have been born in enemy countries was a masterpiece of clearness and logic. He pointed out that they are liable to military service if the militia Act is enforced, just the same as "those who had the wisdom and foresight to be born under the British flag." Both British-born and naturalized subjects pay taxes and bear Canadian responsibilities and obligations, yet the City Council, while continuing these responsibilities, would deprive naturalized subjects of their vote. What grievances, he asked, had the British-born against these people? One was that British citizens in Germany are not entitled to vote. "Well, I haven't got much interest in the British-born who sought naturalization in Germany," he said. "But if they have been disfranchised, it is not the first wrong the Hun has done."

Another "grievance" against naturalized aliens in Canada is that they are disloyal. "I don't know that they are," he declared. "We may assert, but we cannot prove, our loyalty by a tumult of talk."

Bourassa Has His Gang.

Wrongs against Britain had been perpetrated by the British-born themselves. It was said that British lives are in danger in Canada. Well, Sir Roger Casement, British-born, had endangered lives and had met his fate. If naturalized citizens did the same, they would be similarly punished. "But taking away their votes won't save our lives," said Ald. Singer. "If they are disloyal, put them in internment camps."

A fourth grievance was that these citizens are a menace to property. "I don't know a case in Toronto where they have destroyed property," said the alderman, "but I know cases where the British-born in Quebec have torn down placards and destroyed property. If property is in danger, why aren't these British-born deprived of votes. There is no bigger agitator than Bourassa. He has his 'gang'—British-born subjects. Why shouldn't this movement

to take away votes start first in the Province of Quebec, rather than in the city of Toronto? If a man preaches disloyalty, arrest him; but I can imagine no quicker way to make a loyal man disloyal than by taking away his vote."

Autocracy vs. Democracy.

Ald. Singer contended that naturalized subjects could do little harm with their vote, even if they wished. "In Toronto the number of aliens is so small that if they were disloyal and combined together and voted solidly, their vote would not make a particle of difference. But the fact is they are loyal in act and deed; help in all military work; do less agitating against the British crown than some of the British-born. You who favor disfranchisement are doing now what the whole world is trying to prevent over in Europe; substituting autocracy for democracy; encouraging the majority to oppress the minority."

No Party Is Disloyal.

"We went to war in South Africa to give the people what this Council proposes to deny them to-day."

"There are two political parties," continued Ald. Singer. "Naturalized subjects must vote for one or the other. Will anybody stand up and say they are disloyal if they vote for either? Yet that is all they can do with their vote. Then there is the municipal vote. Will any member of this Council say that it is possible in Toronto to elect a representative to this Council who can do any harm to the British Empire? Even if elected, such a man could not carry out his will. He would be mobbed in a week."

"Danger to life or property or opinion cannot exist in this country. All the wrong things in the world were popular at some time, but this wrong

which you propose will gain you only a meteoric popularity. Our soldiers will come back, and they know what liberty is, for they have been fighting for liberty. One told me that members of this Council were 'absolutely crazy' in proposing this sort of resolution. A vote for this motion incites people to mob rule. It is a mischievous motion which, instead of saving lives, is going to endanger them. If it were not for prohibition, a motion of this kind would cause riots. It inflames the minds of the mob—the people who don't think, but who leave the responsibility to us to think for them."

"We Risk Our Voices."

"It has been asked, how can we let the naturalized subjects vote when our soldiers don't. Well, how can we dare to vote ourselves, if that is the argument? Our soldiers are risking their lives for the country. We are risking our voices. The soldier is at the front where, unfortunately, he can't vote. We are here where we can. But we must not impugn the loyalty of people who have not gone to the front when we have not gone ourselves. If conscription were enforced, every British subject would be called on to serve. You propose to leave naturalized subjects this right to fight, but to take away their vote; the right to pay taxes, but not to say what shall be done with their money."

"It is argued that as we in Toronto have undertaken patriotic liabilities of some \$40,000,000, the Government should heed us when we ask for their disfranchisement. Well, who's 'we'? Let me tell you that there was one team in the Red Cross campaign with fifteen subjects of enemy birth, and it raised more money than some of the rest."

Some Features of Debate.

The debate was a remarkable one in many respects. All the speakers declared that they intended disfranchisement for the war only, yet the resolution they passed extended the time "until otherwise provided." Another feature was the plowheel performance of Ald. Maguire, who flopped once at the previous Council

meeting and then back again yesterday. Ald. Graham also aroused some amusement by his pronouncement that "men who do not fight have no right to vote," a doctrine which would leave Canada rather scarce of voters at present. But what caused most talk was Controller Cameron's failure to record his vote on either side, after a long address which swung now this way and now that. Perhaps his indecision was due to a gentle hint from Ald. Ramsden, who has himself a boy at the front and who spoke strongly against the Prussian principles of the resolution. He asked permission to read a newspaper clipping, and commended it particularly to Controller Cameron. But he did not say who wrote it. It said:

"There are hundreds of thousands of men in this country who, though born in enemy countries, have earned Canadian citizenship and hate Kaiserism even more, if it were possible, than we British do, because they have experienced what it means. We would be practising Kaiserism in its worst forms if we deprived these people of the citizenship we have bestowed upon them and dictate to them what conditions they shall live under. That is what our gallant boys are fighting against in Europe to-day. Why create more racial differences and unnecessary hatreds? The man who shows the slightest sign of disloyalty is immediately interned and will be properly dealt with after the war."

It so happens that Controller Cameron couldn't very well vote for the resolution after this clipping was read, for it is an extract from his own statement to the press after the previous debate on alien enemies.

Situation in a Nutshell.

Ald. Risk, who is a consistent advocate of short speeches, sized up the whole situation in a few words as follows: "I am opposed to taking away the liberties of naturalized subjects without taking away their responsibilities. I am not in love with doing such a thing just because Ger-

mans might do the same." Said Controller Shaw: "That man is most loyal who best upholds British institutions, British freedom, and British justice. The resolution to deprive naturalized subjects of their vote is neither justice nor a remedy for any evil which exists."

The men who voted to make of Canada's naturalization pledge a scrap of paper were as follows: Foster, Graham, Nesbitt, Fenwick, Hiltz, Dunn, McMulkin, Gibbons, McBrien, O'Neill, Maguire, Ryding, Robbins, Beamish, Ball, MacGregor, Whetter—17.

The men who had the courage to stand up against a momentary gust of prejudice were as follows: Shaw, Singer, Ramsden, Risk, Archibald—5.



CANADA

"In order that 50,000 troops of the Canadian Expeditionary Force at present serving in Canada may be released for active warfare an appeal is now made to the manhood of Canada, to volunteer for home defence."

SIR EDWARD KEMP,
Minister of Militia and Defence.

"It is the duty of the country to let our troops see their numbers are going to be kept up to the fullest extent."

Right Hon. ANDREW BONAR LAW,
Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Call To Arms For Home Defence

To provide adequately for home defence

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