

PART II.—CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP*

An outline of early naturalization procedure and events leading up to the passing of the Canadian Citizenship Act is given in the Year Book 1951, pp. 153-155.

Section 1.—The Canadian Citizenship Act

The coming into force of the Canadian Citizenship Act on Jan. 1, 1947, marked a new milestone in Canadian history. The passing of this Act exemplified the growth of autonomy in Canada and the advance of Canadian nationhood. Its purpose is to give a clear definition of Canadian citizenship and to provide an underlying community of status for all the people of Canada, helping to bind them together as Canadians.

On Jan. 18, 1950, the administration of Canadian citizenship was transferred from the Department of the Secretary of State to the newly established Department of Citizenship and Immigration. This change has been of considerable benefit in the co-ordination of administrative matters respecting citizenship and immigration, which are interrelated. It has had the additional effect of bringing citizenship to the status of a separate department wherein it is possible to advance materially the scientific planning of education and training in respect to the value and the importance of citizenship in Canada.

The provisions of the Citizenship Act with the changes occasioned by the 1950 and 1951 amendments are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Natural-Born Canadian Citizens.—The Act defines the status of natural-born Canadians before and after the coming into force of the Act, including persons born in and outside of Canada and those born on a Canadian ship or aircraft. A person born outside of Canada out of wedlock is a Canadian citizen if his mother was born in Canada, or on a Canadian ship or aircraft, or was a British subject with Canadian domicile, and had not become an alien. A person born outside of Canada of a Canadian parent before Jan. 1, 1947, is not a Canadian citizen unless, at the commencement of the Act, he had been admitted to Canada for permanent residence, or was a minor. If he was born after Jan. 1, 1947, he is a Canadian citizen, but he ceases to be a Canadian citizen upon reaching the age of two years unless, within that period, or within such extended period as may be authorized in special cases by the Minister, his birth is registered with an official Canadian representative abroad, or with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. In addition, a Canadian born outside of Canada before or after Jan. 1, 1947, ceases to be a Canadian citizen unless, within one year of age 21 (or within such longer period as may be authorized), he files a declaration of retention of Canadian citizenship and, in the case of dual nationality, a declaration renouncing the other nationality or citizenship. A Canadian citizen, whether he is abroad or at home, may obtain a certificate of proof of his Canadian citizenship upon payment of a fee of \$1. Under previous Acts, there was no provision for the issue of certificates of proof of citizenship.

British Subjects, Commonwealth Citizens, Citizens of the Republic of Ireland, and Canadian Citizens.—Sect. 21 of the Citizenship Act states that a Canadian citizen is a British subject. Before Jan. 1, 1947, he could not, officially,

* Prepared in the Canadian Citizenship Branch under the direction of Laval Fortier, Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration.