

Congress Expected to Make Many Changes in Naturalization Law

SWEEPING CHANGES in the naturalization law may be expected during the spring session of congress. These changes will probably follow the recommendation made by Raymond F. Crist, Commissioner of Naturalization, in his annual report to the Secretary of Labor. Briefly, they call for a clearer definition of the special naturalization privilege granted to all honorably discharged soldiers and sailors serving during the world war to conform to peace time conditions; a uniform seaman's discharge certificate for elimination of fraudulent naturalizations; the use of depositions to prove residence within the same state in which petition has been filed instead of requiring physical presence of two witnesses to prove state residence; repeal of the prohibitions in the naturalization law against filing of declarations of intention and the hearing of naturalization petitions within thirty days of election days and the posting of naturalization petitions for at least ninety days before hearing; the extension of the period within which unlawfully arriving aliens may be deported for not less than five years after illegal entry and prohibition against their naturalization until at least five years continuous approved lawful residence; the enactment of a provision requiring annual registration and enrollment of all aliens as a means of checking the wholesale railroading of aliens into the United States and subsequently their admission to citizenship irrespective of illegal entry into the United States, to facilitate the taking of steps for the deportation of those who are barred under our immigration statutes and to legalize the admission of those found worthy of remaining, placing them in the position where they have nothing to hide so that they may take their place as worthy Americans, side by side with other Americans of similar worth; and that naturalization proceedings be brought entirely within the administrative branch of the Government and thereby relieve the judiciary of the tedium of naturalization, with the right of appeal from the Commissioner of Naturalization or a Naturalization Commission to the appellate court of the United States in whose jurisdiction the alien petitioner resides."

Commissioner Crist's recommendations for this remedial legislation are supplemented by a recital of clearly defined benefits to the candidates for citizenship and the citizenry of the country. They are based upon facts and are consistently in line with the budget plan of efficiency and economy in the administration of the "business" of the government relating to the process of assimilating the political family of the United States.

During the year 1923, 145,084 were admitted to American citizenship, 24,874 of whom were from Italy, 22,621 from Poland, 17,190 from Russia, 16,953 from Great Britain and possessions (except Canada), 12,064 from Germany and the remainder from smaller countries and their possessions.

The report shows that 24,884 were denied or rejected for various causes, most of which will be avoided in the future, according to Commissioner

Crist, under the recently adopted plan for simplifying the administrative machinery by establishing a contact between the naturalization examining force and the applicant for naturalization **before** he files his naturalization petition instead of **after**. Under this plan the field officer will be able to adjust such defects as may be disclosed by his examination and insure the filing of a petition free from the risk of dismissal because of legal defects: "In short, the Government at once becomes the 'friend' of its adopted son instead of acting in the time-old conception of hindering, rather than aiding our foreign born to become citizens."

To improve the citizenry of the country, the Bureau has supplied the public schools of 2,461 communities throughout the United States with 239,995 copies of the Federal Citizenship Text Book and its several supplements. Under the law this text book is furnished by the Government to teach English and citizenship to candidates for citizenship in attendance upon public schools.

A notable feature of the report brings out the fact that 22,209 declarations of intention were filed by women under the "Cable Act" of September 22, 1922, which accorded separate citizenship rights to women. The law providing independent naturalization and citizenship for married women has resulted in the extension of women's classes all over the country. Statistics compiled subsequent to the preparation of the report show that women in attendance upon public school classes for adult immigrants averaged thirty-five per cent of the approximately 250,000 reported to have been enrolled in 1923. In New York City alone 131 classes were conducted for women with an enrollment of 1,257, up to February 1, 1923; Hibbing, Minn., had six Americanization home teachers, each with an enrollment of over 502; Jackson, Miss., conducted classes in thirty-one homes; Kansas City, Kans., had thirty, and similar favorable reports have come from other sections of the country.

In spite of the political turmoil in Europe and the tendency against organized government, the work of 1923 resulting from the co-operation of the Bureau of Naturalization with municipalities throughout the country shows a high wave of optimism and an increasing spirit of Americanism in every locality where patriotic exercises for new citizens were held.

Commissioner Crist points out in his report that all of these activities in so far as the cost of administration by the Bureau of Naturalization is concerned, including the cost of publishing the Citizenship Text Book, and the administration of the naturalization law, are being paid for practically in their entirety from the fees paid by candidates for their naturalization papers.

GET USED TO IT

William von Humboldt

It is a proverbial saying that everyone makes his own destiny; and this is usually interpreted that everyone, by his wise or unwise conduct, prepares good or evil for himself, but we may also understand it that whatever it be that he receives from the hand of Providence, he may so accommodate himself to it that he will find his lot good for him, however much may seem to others to be wanting.