

A Question and Answer Page for Foreign-Born

Questions on Americanization, Naturalization, Citizenship, Civil Rights and all matters of importance in regard to the necessary adjustments for foreign-born who have come here for the purpose of remaining permanently, will be answered promptly and as fully as possible, By Judge J. A. Buchanan, President Astoria Americanization Council in Astoria, and by H. J. Langoe, Editor The United American. Anyone asking a question may request that it be published under such pseudonym as he desires but the questioner must in all instances sign his correct name and address to the letter that accompanies the question. Anonymous questions will not be published or answered in this forum. People who are living in Astoria and vicinity may address their questions directly to Judge Buchanan.

Q.—For many years I have been a fisherman on the lower Columbia River and have paid for my license to fish every summer. In 1923 when I came to the cannery office to get a license I was asked if I was a citizen? I said: "no." Then they said I could not get a license. I have a family to support and children going to school. I own a home in Astoria and have paid taxes many years. What is the matter, they make law that family man and taxpayer cannot fish and make living? Well, I go to school in Astoria and study hard. I am old man now, and it is not easy to learn reading, writing and all about our government so that I can be naturalized and get citizen paper and a license to fish. Well, I go up to Court House in Astoria with two witnesses last Fall to see about getting paper. I answered many questions all right. Some I didn't know. Then the government man he asks me if I fished in 1921 and 1922. I told him, yes. He asked me if I had license, I told him I got fishing license from cannery office for many years. He asked me if I didn't

know there was a law made against aliens fishing in 1921? I told him I had heard so, but the cannery people knew I was not citizen, but they gave me license just the same and said it was all right. He then told the judge that I had broken a law and couldn't be citizen. The judge said he was right. They would not listen to me, and the judge said he would not give me papers for five years. They said I was a bad man and had lied to get fishing license. Now, I didn't lie. I never signed no paper or nothing I got my license, same as before. Now what am I to do? I cannot find other work. My money is soon gone. Guess I must lose home and all. I think it is very wrong to treat me like that. I worry so I am sick. What can I do to make my living fishing again.

—Edw. P.

A.—Your case is one of many hundreds among alien fishermen in Oregon, who were led to believe that the state fishing law of 1921, which denied aliens the right to fish in the commercial waters of Oregon, would never be enforced, who were told that it was unconstitutional and would never stand approved by the courts. The issue was one of state regulation only and no one, perhaps, in all Oregon thought for a moment that the Naturalization officers here would take action where the state did not. But unfortunately these officers are constantly bringing the question up and whether a citizenship applicant signed the application for license or someone else signed it for him, they claim that inasmuch as the applicant had knowledge of the state law forbidding him to fish, they hold that whether the state enforces its own laws or not, it matters not with them. They contend that the applicant knowingly violated a state law and demand that his application be denied with prejudice from the Court and that he be further denied a chance to come into Court again for five years. The Oregon courts, particularly in Astoria, have been very accommodating and have in this way placed both livelihood and property of a great many fishermen, homeowners and tax-payers, in serious jeopardy. The state of Oregon in the last legislative session amended this law and though the intent of the amendment is set out in a cumbersome language form, the state has nevertheless gone on record as having repealed its prejudicial exclusion law, giving the aliens a chance to fish while preparing themselves for citizenship. All this, however, is of no avail as long as the Naturalization proceedings in Oregon are carried on as trial proceedings with

the Naturalization officers assuming the position of state prosecutors, taking action where no state prosecutor has taken action and no state grand jury has returned an indictment. Your offense is only a technical offense, rendered so all

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