

Montreal, 4 November 2016

To : The Presiding Official
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
305 René-Lévesque Boulevard W.
Montréal QC, H2Z 1A6

Dear Sir/Madam,

In accord with a ruling made by the Court of Appeal for Ontario concerning the Citizenship Oath (McAteer v. Canada, 2014 ONCA 578, paragraph 76) that

“the appellants have the opportunity to publicly disavow what they consider to be the message conveyed by the oath”¹

I hereby disavow what I consider to be conveyed by the section of the Citizenship Oath relating to the monarchy that I was by law obliged to take earlier today in order to become a Canadian citizen.

There are a number of reasons for my disavowal:

1. It is contrary to my democratic beliefs to pledge allegiance to a monarch. The monarchy by definition represents the principle of inherited privilege which is, I believe, a fundamental contravention of democratic principles in which government is vested in the people and exercised by them through a system of representation.
2. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) guarantees freedom of conscience, thought, belief, opinion, expression, and speech. It is contrary to my conscience, thought and belief to pledge allegiance to a monarch. I therefore wish to exercise my rights of conscience, thought, and belief, as well as my rights of freedom of expression and speech, to disavow the pledge of allegiance to the monarch.
3. I salute the commitment to multiculturalism, defined in “Discover Canada” as a “fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity.” However, as a Welsh-speaking Welshman, French-speaking resident of Québec, and Canada Research Chair in Indian Ocean World History at McGill University, I am acutely conscious that for many in this plural society the Crown represents a deeply divisive history of English colonialism and imperial exploitation.
4. There is a clear precedent for this. On 30 November 2015, with the prior permission of Citizenship Judge, Albert Wong, Dror Bar-Natan took his Citizenship oath then immediately afterwards approached the Judge, renounced the part of the oath that refers to the monarchy, and made a verbal pledge “to Canada and the people of Canada.”²

¹ See <http://www.ontariocourts.ca/decisions/2014/2014ONCA0578.htm>

² See <http://disavowal.ca/>

5. No native-born Canadians are obliged to take an oath to a monarchy. Thus my wife, a native-born Canadian citizen, has never sworn allegiance to the Queen.
6. Although I hold British Citizenship, I too have never before had to swear allegiance to the Queen.

I would likewise urge Canadian politicians to recognise the inherent contradictions that exist between:

- (i) the rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), and the denial of those rights to immigrants and higher officials when obliged to pledge allegiance to the Queen and her descendants.
- (ii) a proud and independent democracy, and a former colony that recognises as Head of State a monarch who represents both inherited privilege and a legacy of English colonial exploitation deeply offensive to many immigrants.

Sincerely



Gwyn Campbell

UCI: 54058334; Application: C000338004

- cc. The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister
The Honourable John McCallum, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship
The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, P.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General
The Honourable Thomas J. Mulcair, M.P., Outremont, leader NDP
The Honourable Philippe Couillard, M.P., premier ministre du Québec
The Honourable Jean-François Lisée, Député de Rosemont, chef du Parti Québécois
The Director, CIC Eastern Region, 1010 Saint-Antoine W., Montréal, QC H3C 1B2
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