

July 2018 - Exchange between Ann Magner and Neil R. Ellis, M.P., Bay of Quinte.

(Magner's side lightly edited)

<http://disavowal.ca/Magner/ExchangeWithEllis.pdf>

From: Ann Magner

Date: Tue, Jul 10, 2018 at 8:49 PM

Subject: Oath of Citizenship of Canada

To: Neil.Ellis@parl.gc.ca

Good day Mr Ellis. My purpose in writing to you today is to express my intention to publicly disavow the entire portion of the Oath of Citizenship of Canada which swears allegiance to the Queen of Canada, her heirs and successors. My oath to Canada in its entirety is to swear "that I will observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen."

As per McAteer v. Canada, 2014 ONCA 578, I have the right to disavow the message of the present wording which I believe to be detrimental to Canada, its people, and the land itself. I hope the time will come soon when Canada has an oath that truly reflects the diversity and beauty of this great country and its people, rather than slavishly mouthing words to a foreign entity born in privilege. The following declaration, written in 1994 during a previous parliamentary review of the oath, reflects my views of Canada perfectly: *I am a citizen of Canada, and I make this commitment: to uphold our laws and freedoms; to respect our people in their diversity; to work for our common well-being; and to safeguard and honour this ancient northern land.*

Thank you so much for taking the time to read about my views on the Canadian citizenship oath. I urge you and your fellow MPs of all parties to re-engage with this issue and I look forward to reading about a new debate in the near future.

Yours truly

Ann Magner



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July 11, 2018

Dear Ann,

It's wonderful to hear from you, and to have the opportunity to learn about the issues that mean the most to you. Thanks for taking the time to convey your perspective regarding the Oath of Citizenship of Canada. I do appreciate the opportunity to hear your view and the chance to offer some additional information on the history of the wording and references made by the Oath, to further support your continued review of this matter.

Please be assured that I deeply respect your candor concerning the wording of the Oath. As you are aware, in its present format, the Oath of Citizenship of Canada reflects the historical context of our nation, whereby the formal constitutional structures are an inheritance from the monarchy of England.

More specifically, two British historical colonies titled Upper Canada and Lower Canada were created by the Constitutional Act of 1791, in present day Canada. Both Upper and Lower Canada were abolished in 1841 by the union of both colonies. The formation of these colonies followed after many years of European settlement (predominantly French) and trade route establishments with Indigenous communities across North America that took place as early as 1686.

While the celebration of our Constitution Act of 1867 marks the official start of a unified national history—with our own governance structure modelled after Westminster—it's important to note that there are many fascinating personages of all nationalities, as well as events, which comprise the key components of our full, diverse, and complex national past.

You may also be interested to learn that it wasn't until 1947, with the creation of the *Canadian Citizenship Act* that Canadian citizenship was first established. Previous to 1947, all Canadian born or naturalized immigrants were considered British subjects. Obviously this is a very succinct overview of the truly complex historical context of the formation of Canada as we know it today and the origins of the Oath's wording.

Our current version of this legislation permits both Canadian-born and naturalized citizens to be entitled to the rights of a citizen, and subject to the duties of a citizen, including:

- Guaranteed democratic rights;
- The right to vote in elections of the House of Commons and legislative assemblies; and
- The right to run for public office.

The Oath, as part of this process of endowing citizenship to individuals, retains the language which reflects the complexity of the Canadian national



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identity—defined currently as a *federal parliamentary democracy* and a *constitutional monarchy*, with Queen Elizabeth II remaining the head of state.

Again, Ann, I deeply appreciate the time you've taken to read, and consider, the points shared above. It's a pleasure to be entrusted with your comments and perspective on the current wording of the Oath of Citizenship of Canada, as I continue to represent you here in Ottawa. The capacity to hold enduring dialogue on such an important issue is truly a privilege. Please continue to reach out, again, if you have any additional questions or concerns, going forward.

Warmest regards,

Mr. Neil R. Ellis
M.P. Bay of Quinte

From: Ann Magner
Date: Wed, Jul 11, 2018 at 7:06 PM
Subject: Re: Oath of Citizenship of Canada

To: Neil.Ellis@parl.gc.ca

Hello Mr Ellis, Thank you for the thoughtful response to my email. I appreciate the historical ties that Canada has to Britain and the monarchy. Governments and countries evolve and head in very different directions over time. In fact you mentioned in your letter that before 1947, there was no such thing as Canadian citizenship! Canada has matured into a progressive, independent democracy and I am so happy to be a citizen and to live here. To me the monarchy represents the antithesis of this independence. Rather it represents inherited privilege – an accident of birth – and egregious exploitation in every corner of the world. In 2018 there is no justification whatsoever in subjugating ourselves to a privileged foreign family with this history. I do not advocate rewriting history or erasing certain chapters from our history. On the contrary, we absolutely need to know the truth - all the great things humanity has done so far, and also all the mistakes we have made so far. We can't look back on the history of Canada and Great Britain without seeing the ugly parts as well as the great ones. We must learn from both and continue progressing until all our citizens, and all people here, are equal and free.

Thanks again for your time, Mr Ellis, I value your service to Canada.

Yours truly,

Ann Magner