INTRODUCTION

COMPLICATING CITIZENSHIP: FROM A 'WARM BATH OF BELONGING' TO A COLD SPLASH OF AWARENESS OF COMPLEXITIES, CHALLENGES, TENSIONS

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Randy Boswell is a journalism professor at Carleton University and a former senior national writer with Postmedia News who covered politics, science and culture while developing a unique specialization in stories about Canadian history. He has served as guest editor of numerous volumes of *Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens* for the Association for Canadian Studies, including this present edition of the ACS's flagship publication.

There's a couple canoeing on the Rideau Canal with the Parliament Buildings in the background. Been there, done that.

There's a full-rack moose, posed majestically, in a wildflower meadow. Seen it. Loved it.

There's a medal-bedecked veteran, perhaps on Remembrance Day, standing in a cemetery. I've been moved many times, too, by that kind of scene: the courage, the sacrifice, the defence of freedom and democracy.

When it comes to appreciating images meant to stir a sense of patriotism, of allegiance, of identity – of gratitude for the privilege of being Canadian – I'm an easy mark. Those pictures, all found on the cover of this country's official, 68–page, 12-year-old citizenship guide, *Discover Canada*, resonate well with this Anglo-Saxon child of Centennial-era Southern Ontario, born just months before the Toronto Maple Leafs last won the Stanley Cup and the nation celebrated its 100th birthday with a World's Fair in Montreal.

"Citizenship" for this citizen wasn't something to be consciously, probingly pondered. It wasn't a process to navigate, a status to be achieved, an issue to be debated, a trap to be avoided.

It just *was* – something you were born into, like waking up immersed in a warm bath of belonging.

A responsibility? Sure, but nothing too strenuous: Go to school, sing the anthem, obey the rules, cheer on Team Canada, pay your taxes, cast your vote. In return, you get to live in the world's greatest country, swim in pristine lakes, encounter bears with alarming regularity and enjoy the many other blessings of life in a relatively stable, peaceable, prosperous, maple syrup-soaked land.

But this volume of essays about the history of Canadian citizenship – and the challenges faced by the institution of nation-state membership in this country – represents an invigorating splash of cold water for we blissful bathers of Canada.

We learn that citizenship can be viewed as a badge of honour but also as a system of indoctrinating the population in ever-evolving sets of values and narratives serving state imperatives. It's an elusive dream for many but an expensive, burdensome source of aggravation for others – one increasingly being rejected by many applicants-turned-"onward migrants" who no longer embrace the value proposition of becoming Canadian.

And while citizenship is seen as something to be better promoted, nurtured and rejuvenated in the 21st century, it also remains a deep-rooted source of suspicion and hostility for many of the country's Indigenous people, whose resurgent nations within geographic Canada are their own sources of pride, loyalty, vision and community.

Canadian citizenship was created in 1947 after the passage of the Canadian *Citizenship Act*. Before 1947, both people born in Canada and naturalized immigrants were considered British subjects. On Jan. 1, 1947, the Canadian *Citizenship Act* came into force and constituted the first nationality law to define persons as Canadian.

The law now stipulates that both Canadian-born individuals and naturalized citizens are entitled to the rights and subject to the duties of citizenship in Canada. But in many ways, Canadian citizenship – its history, evolution, symbolism, processes, economic and political dimensions, flashpoints and more – is not well understood by Canadians.

At the time of application for citizenship, all persons between 18 and 54 must take a test to determine whether they have adequate knowledge of Canada. Those who secure their Canadian nationality must take the Oath of Citizenship. Recently there have been controversial changes to the Oath and to the citizenship guide reflecting fresh perspectives on Canada's history and relevant national responsibilities arising from the past.

Recent studies have also confirmed a significant reduction in newcomer uptake of Canadian citizenship with few explanations as to why that is transpiring or what it implies.

For this edition of *Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens*, contributors were asked to reflect on whatever aspects of Canadian citizenship – historical, contemporary or both – they deemed interesting, contentious or important to illuminate. Through essays or interviews, the contributors were invited to consider some of the aforementioned issues while sharing their vision of what it means to be a Canadian citizen in the 2020s and exploring other aspects of citizenship in this country.

University of British Columbia professor Catherine

Broom, a leading scholar on the history of Canadian citizenship, takes a deep dive into the texts and policies underlying citizenship education in Canada through the many generations since Confederation. She unpacks decades of evolving approaches to instilling values and beliefs about citizenship, highlighting how "the focus on teaching Canada's nation-building narratives changed by the end of the 21st century as curricular content increasingly problematized these stories."

University of Ottawa sociologist Elke Winter and political scientist Friederike Alm of Germany's Goethe University collaborate on an essay documenting what they describe as a long period of "profound and much needed liberalization" of Canadian citizenship that shed many of its "discriminatory monoethnic tendencies," before a more recent period of "neoliberalization" that recast citizenship "as a 'first prize' for successful, self-driven individuals" and began eroding a collective sense of belonging based on "mutual trust and care."

Jack Jedwab, president of the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute, presents and interprets findings from a September 2023 survey of more than 1,500 Canadians in which voter participation is examined as an indicator of engaged and effective citizenship. While the results do suggest a correlation between relatively low participation at the ballot box and self-identification as an immigrant or visible minority Canadian, Jedwab cautions that "associating lower immigrant voter participation with a weakened sense of citizenship requires more investigation to determine why this is the case."

Ninette Kelley, a former senior officer with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and co-author of *The Making of the Mosaic: The History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (2010), reflected on Canada's challenges around citizenship in an interview transcribed and excerpted for this volume. She raises concerns about various obstacles – financial and procedural – creating a "a dampening effect on people acquiring citizenship" and thus preventing many would-be immigrants to Canada from cementing their attachment to this country. "By not helping people become full citizens – by not encouraging that project, by creating barriers to it – I think we are working against the objectives of our own act and institutions," Kelley argues.

Daphne Winland, an anthropology professor at York University, examines three case studies that shed light on challenges and controversies that have emerged around "the stories that we tell ourselves as reflected in citizenship policies, practices and principles." The Canada 150 "celebrations" marking the 2017 sesquicentennial of Confederation, for example, are shown to have conflicted with the state's "disturbing record of historical injustice that disrupts these aspirational narratives" of Canada as a land of "fairness and equality." And the country's responses to refugee crises – including the mass influx of Indochinese "Boat People" in 1979 – raise questions for Winland about whether the "motivations and expectations" of sponsors "cohere with the project of resettling refugees as future citizens."

Andrew Griffith, former Director General of the Citizenship and Multiculturalism Branch at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, closely scrutinizes a range of challenges facing Canada's immigration and citizenship regimes. While calling for greater transparency of data tracking the Can-

adian government's handling of citizenship applications and other stages of the process, Griffith urges – among numerous other practical recommendations – the prompt release of the long-awaited new version of the official citizenship guide to replace the current edition, which he describes as "dated in terms of approach, emphasis and examples" and at odds with "the government's inclusion emphasis."

Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson recounts in a wide-ranging interview her leadership of the Senate's 2021 passage of Bill C-8, which revised Canada's Oath of Citizenship to include an explicit reference to the Aboriginal and treaty rights embedded in Canada's Constitution. Sen. Anderson, a "proud Inuvialuk" who represents the Northwest Territories in the Upper House, describes how the Canadian government's push to assimilate Inuit residents of the North in the 20th century – including members of her own family – cast a cloud of suspicion around citizenship and other forms of state disruption of their culture that persists to the present time. But she said the rewriting of the Oath was a significant achievement because seizing "any opportunity to provide education and inform individuals who are non-Indigenous about the Indigenous history of Canada is integral."

Finally, the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson – who served as Canada's Governor General from 1999 to 2005, and later co-founded the Institute for Canadian Citizenship with her husband, the writer John Ralston Saul – describes in an essay the organization's almost 20-year mission to help newcomers to this country integrate into Canadian life. The goal, she writes, is "to help people belong right from the moment they have made the important decision to become Canadian citizens. Belonging is what matters to everybody as a human being and the longing is what we must always try to promote and encourage as a country."