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Aliens Who Dodged War Prepare to Become Citizens

An increase in the number of resident aliens applying for citizenship is due after November 11th. On that day the time limit debarring aliens who claimed exemption from military service during the World War from becoming citizens will be lifted. Available records of the Naturalization Bureau of the Department of Labor show that well over 6,000 aliens in this category have been denied their requests for citizenship since the Armistice. Probably thousands of others have held off applying because they thought they would be turned down.

No general hard and fast law applies in these cases of denied citizenship. In fact, some judges have allowed men who claimed exemption from the Selective Service Act to become citizens. The majority of judges, however, have denied the requests, basing their decisions on that clause of the Naturalization Act which declares that the applicant must establish that during at least five years immediately preceding his application his conduct has been good and that he has been willing to support and defend the Constitution. Most judges who have denied applications have ruled that, if the applicant claimed military exemption in the hour of national peril, he showed thereby an unwillingness to defend the Constitution.

The few judges who have allowed these aliens citizenship have based their action on the ground that since the applicant was an alien he was not required to take military service, aliens being specifically exempted in the Selective Service Act, and that therefore his claim for exemption should not be held against him.

