

TO BECOME BRITISH BECAUSE OF TAX

Two Seligmans and Others May
Change Citizenship Owing
to Income Impost.

CALLED DOUBLE TAXATION

American Society in London Asks
Washington to Relieve Those
Paying to Great Britain.

Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, March 6.—A report current in the American colony that Isaac Seligman had taken steps to renounce his American citizenship and become a British subject could not be confirmed to-day, as Mr. Seligman is traveling on the Continent.

It is said that David A. Seligman also will become a British subject and that several other Americans resident here contemplate the same step.

Frank E. Bliss, whose name has been mentioned in this connection, admitted to-night that he had taken steps to renounce American citizenship, but when asked if the new income tax law was cause of his decision to become a British subject, he said:

"I have not told any one of my reasons. I do not care to make any statement whatever as to my reasons. No one has been authorized to speak for me, and any reports that it is owing to the American income tax law are wholly the product of imagination."

Despite Mr. Bliss's personal denial, it is felt that the sudden popularity of British citizenship with American residents of London and the efforts of the American society in London to obtain a less harsh interpretation of the income tax law as applied to American residents here is more than a coincidence.

As the law is understood here the American residents of London believe that they are exposed to double taxation. They are forced to pay not only the English income tax, but the American tax as well, and this, too, on incomes earned in England, which is the principal grievance. As a result of this the American Society has taken steps to obtain an authoritative interpretation of the law, and, if possible, a ruling which will relieve the American business and professional men, resident here, of the necessity of paying two income taxes or of renouncing American citizenship as alternative.

A memorial has been sent through the embassy to the Secretary of the Treasury, presenting arguments why Americans here should not be forced to pay the American income tax on incomes earned here, and asking that the department make a ruling to that effect.

An influential member of the American Society said:

"We are willing to pay the English income tax, for if you are enjoying the protection of the country, you ought to pay something toward running it. We are also willing to pay the American tax on incomes, derived from the United States, but to be forced to pay the American tax on top of the English tax on incomes earned in England, is unjust.

"We understand that the authorities in Washington have given relief to aliens, resident in the United States, who pay income taxes in their native land. We think we should have the same right, and believe that our action in sending a memorial to Washington will result in giving us relief.

"You know who they are really after—the idle rich, who come over here to buy property and spend here incomes drawn from the United States."

An official of the American society said:

"Our society has taken up the matter because we felt that double taxation of the American business men in London would handicap us against

other foreigners here. Our feeling was that the law was not yet fully interpreted and that possibly there was no intention of interpreting the law in such a way as to force Americans to pay double tax on incomes earned here. It was thought that the proper procedure was to submit the question to the authorities and ask for a ruling.

"The memorial was couched in a modest and reasonable way so as not to offend anybody's susceptibilities and was sent through the Ambassador to the Secretary of the Treasury asking if it was impossible to rule that Americans engaged in business or professional pursuits abroad should be exempted from the double tax. We believe that if the authorities desire to interpret the law in that way they can find ample excuse for so doing.

"It is felt that there are no better Ambassadors of American commerce than the American business men abroad. They are probably doing as much good for American commerce as any one possibly can and to double the tax would be to handicap them. It is totally different from the case of Americans who derive their incomes from the other side, and come here to spend it. They ought to be made to pay the American income tax on American incomes, but to make Americans, engaged in business or professional work here pay the American tax on incomes earned in England is manifestly unjust."