

COMMON CITIZENSHIP WITHIN THE EMPIRE.

The discussion over the alleged deportation to Siberia, by the Russian Government, of three Russians who had taken out Canadian naturalization papers and the attention thereby drawn to the fact that colonial naturalization does not constitute the subject a citizen of the British Empire, have naturally renewed the agitation for a common Imperial citizenship. When it was stated, last Christmas, that Sir Thomas Shaughnessy was to be elevated to the peerage, the question was at once raised as to his eligibility, he being a citizen of Canada, not of Great Britain. That such an objection could be advanced against one of the foremost citizens of the Dominion, was an illustration, apparent to all, of the anomalous condition of the law, and it provoked, as has the case of the three Russian-Canadians, demand for reform.

Peculiarly interesting, in view of the current controversy over the relations of Great Britain and Canada, is the fact that there is apparently unanimity of opinion that there should be imperial citizenship; that the subject of the Crown in Canada should be its subject in every part of the Empire. In other words, in regard to this important matter of citizenship, it is unversally acknowledged that we in Canada have common interest with the other peoples of the Empire. There is, in regard to this subject, no demand that we stand alone. We hold, apparently, to the view that Canada's interests are to be served by the various parts of the Empire, acting in concert in regard to this matter.

This being the case in reference to citizenship acquired through naturalization, may it not be that there are other matters of common concern upon which we could with safety and advantage co-operate with the rest of the Empire? If it is acknowledged that a common imperial citizenship is much to be desired, may it not be that there are other subjects upon which we could with much advantage act in close unison with our fellow-citizens of other parts of the Empire? Certainly, when we can welcome an imperial citizenship, there seems no sufficient reason why we should shrink from other responsibilities as though they are dangerous merely because they are imperial.