

Sir WILFRID LAURIER—*cont.*

The power of naturalisation is one of the incidental powers of sovereignty, and one of the most important attributes of sovereignty. The British Government in granting the constitutions of the several Dominions has parted with this power of sovereignty and delegated it to the Dominions. It has given the power to all the Dominions of granting letters of naturalisation to aliens. That was one of the necessary incidents, I think, of the power of self-government which was given to the Dominions, and the one power which it was very important for them to have, because, being young nations and all inviting immigration, it followed as a measure of practical moment that they should have the power to grant letters of naturalisation. They have all availed themselves of that power, and each one has its own law of naturalisation, and those laws are all different, as Mr. Batchelor has said. I do not think there are two laws in all the Dominions which are here represented which are the same—they all vary.

The practical difficulty, which arises at once is, as to what is to be the effect of this power of naturalisation. The power which is given to Canada, to New Zealand, and to all the self-governing Dominions, is one which is limited, each to its own territory. It does not extend beyond the limits of the territory covered by that legislation. If a man from Denmark, or Switzerland, or Sweden, or Norway comes to Canada, and conforms to our laws of naturalisation, he becomes a British subject *quoad* Canada alone. He is a British subject so long as he remains in Canada; but the moment that same man goes out of the territory of Canada, if he comes from Denmark he remains a Dane, and if he comes from Sweden he is a Swede. So he has a divided allegiance; he is a British subject in Canada if naturalised in Canada, and he is a British subject in Australia if he is naturalised in Australia, and so on, but he remains a citizen of his native country the moment he is out of the Dominion of his naturalisation. For instance, if a Canadian to-day comes to Great Britain, and he was a native of the United States and has become a British subject in Canada, in Great Britain he is not recognised as a British subject. Therefore, here is a difficulty at once which is of the greatest possible moment.

In Canada, where we receive annually at the present time some 100,000 American citizens, who generally take out letters of naturalisation as soon as it is possible for them to do so, we are in this condition: those 100,000 American citizens are British subjects in Canada, but if they come to Great Britain they are still American citizens. In these days of travel and locomotion it is conceivable that this condition of things—this divided allegiance—may produce serious complications. Therefore I think the first consequence to be deduced from this condition of things, this divided power of legislation between the Mother-country and the Dominions beyond the seas, must be remedied in some way, and I think this principle may be laid down as an object to be ultimately reached—a British subject anywhere, a British subject everywhere. The Imperial Government has naturally retained to itself the power to grant letters of naturalisation, and I understand that jurists are of opinion that letters of naturalisation issued here in Great Britain under the authority of British legislation carry their effect not only in Great Britain, but in Canada, in Australia, in all the oversea Dominions, and everywhere. That is to say, letters of naturalisation granted here in England make a man a British subject all over the world, whereas the letters of naturalisation granted by the authority of the Dominions beyond the seas are restricted only to their own respective territories. I say that this legislation at once ought to be remedied in some way, and a measure ought to be adopted whereby it should be universal that, if a man is made a British subject somewhere in the British Empire under authority delegated by this Parliament of Great Britain, then legislation to that effect should carry the power of naturalisation not only in the country in which naturalisation has been granted, but all over the British Empire, or, indeed, all over the world. In other words, *civis Britannicus* is *civis Britannicus* not only in the country of naturalisation, but everywhere. This principle, it seems to me, is the one which ought to be reached and ought to be adopted; otherwise we are liable to very serious complications. Therefore I say that we should have uniformity in the effect of naturalisation, and the principle should be adopted that whenever a man is naturalised, whether it be in the United Kingdom or in any one