

## NATIONALITY AND CITIZENSHIP

WHAT is meant by the term "British citizen," of which we are hearing so much? No definite conclusion is likely to be reached, for the simple reason that a British citizen is an animal belonging, like a griffin or a unicorn, to the realm of fancy.

If it means "British subject" it is better to say so. If it is intended to imply that all subjects of the King have certain political rights in common, it is misleading. The rights of British subjects vary greatly. Englishmen or Canadians, subjects in the crown colonies, British Indians, members of the native races in South Africa, are examples of British subjects whose rights differ widely from one another. Peers of the United Kingdom, women, Kaffirs, though they may be British subjects, enjoy only restricted rights. They all wear their rue with a difference. No one supposes that all British subjects are equal as regards their civil and political rights, and the new-fangled term "British citizen" is objectionable because it suggests such an equality. In spite of the fact that the term creeps in even at Imperial Conferences, where people ought to speak by the card, it is to be recommended only to those who hold with Talleyrand that language is given us to conceal thought.

Under the republican form of government, "citizen" is generally used to mean a member of the sovereign people, and in popular language often denotes one who possesses the franchise. But, even in the United States, this is not its legal meaning, for minors may be citizens though they cannot vote, and women may be citizens of a state which confines the vote to men. The American Constitution declares that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside." And when we speak of a