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TORONTO, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1897.

THE SITUATION.

It is becoming probable that the measures being taken to prevent a famine in the Klondyke will be successful. First, the Canadian Mounted Police induced large numbers to go down the Yukon, from Dawson city, to where supplies of food are known to be stored. Next, the American Government is taking measures to relieve such of its citizens who remained behind in British territory, or who further down, north, may be in danger of suffering from a want of provisions. Congress is showing great alacrity in voting the necessary supplies. Six hundred reindeer are to be used, as Russia uses camels in Central Asia, to carry supplies; and the reindeer, of which there are to be 600, may, like the camels, be found difficult to feed on the way. On one of the Russian winter expeditions, the camels had to take a range of twenty miles to find food, in addition to such portion as it was possible to carry. The loss of camels on the way was enormous; if the reindeer be overloaded and underfed, a similar disaster may happen. Now-a-days much food supplies for man can be carried in concentrated forms, and this will be done now. The State Department of Washington has asked the British Government to obtain from the Canadian Government permission to pass over our territory, and as this is an errand of mercy our Government is not likely to interpose any objection; Canada could only object on the ground that the duty is one which she ought herself to perform. It is of course necessary to be convinced of the necessity of any expedition at all. As leave will be asked to have United States soldiers accompany the expedition, as guards, it will be necessary strictly to limit their numbers. The country belongs to Canada, and it is the duty of Canada to provide for its security. This duty will be performed by, if report be true, a considerable addition to the number of Mounted Police already in the Klondyke.

By pleading urgency for the suspension of killing seals at sea, the representative of the American Government, Mr. Foster, sought to detach this question from the list of others awaiting settlement between the United States and Canada, in the hopes of getting such a settlement of that as his country desires, and leaving the others to the chances

of the future. In this he has not succeeded. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in his negotiation with Mr. Foster, gives his reasons for being unable to agree to the American proposal, the chief of which is that the Canadian sealers are preparing as usual for the permitted season of pelagic sealing, and if they were prevented now from following their usual occupation, there would come a demand for damages larger than Parliament would be willing to meet. Besides he does not think that the killing some 6,000 seals at sea would put the herd in jeopardy; a point on which Mr. Foster does not, of course, agree with him. As each seal is said to require ten pounds of fish for its daily food, it would not be amiss if some economist, with a taste for figures, would take the trouble to figure out what it costs in food suitable for man to feed this voracious herd. If the seals were not there to devour this fish, the quantity of food fish available for human substance would probably increase in a proportion at least equal to the whole quantity which the seals now devour. Allowance might be made for the effects of the voracity of the fish themselves in preying upon one another; if this were done, and the account balanced, the world would see what it is paying to keep up this herd, and whether the operation is not a losing one. The men now employed in catching the seals and curing their skins would be available for employment in something else. Mr. Foster volunteers the statement that sealing, both on land and at sea, is now carried on at a loss. If this be so, the sealing, as a pursuit, will soon decide for itself what to do.

The sawlogs question, so far as Ontario is concerned, finds its solution in a resolution requiring the logs to be manufactured in Canada; all timber licenses issued after the 30th April, 1898, are to contain a condition to that effect. Such is the purport of the measure brought down by Mr. Gibson on behalf of the Ontario Provincial Government. The new regulation will be confined to timber lands belonging to the Crown. The township of Aweres, Algoma, is an exception, a contract controlling the timber cut there making a special condition. The larger part of the timber limits now in the hands of Americans were obtained, not from the Crown, but from private holders. In a few years the limits now being worked will give out; and regard being had to the future, it is the crown timber lands that will supply our future needs, both for home use and export. The regulation requiring logs to be manufactured in Canada will probably lessen the price which the Government of Ontario will hereafter obtain for limits. In the revenue from this source there is almost certain to be a decline, not necessarily in the gross amount received, for that would depend on the extent of the area covered by new limits, but in amount per square mile received. For another reason—the lessening of the supply—the opposite tendency may be expected to show itself. But if the one tendency should balance the other, it would be erroneous to conclude that the requirement of local manufacture had not reduced the price of the raw material. This action of the Ontario Government will help, as far as it goes, to solve the sawlog question for the Ottawa Government. No export duty on sawlogs need be looked for. The other provinces can, if they like, take a leaf out of the book of Ontario. It can scarcely be said that, as yet, any strong national impulse for the preservation of our forest resources has been felt. There have been many panicky attempts to create alarm over the alleged near approach of the exhaustion of the supply; but it has often come from persons who were in a hurry to cut all they could, and who looked with jealous eyes on people similarly affected.