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**TORONTO, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1899.**

### THE SITUATION.

No time has been lost in getting ready the second Canadian contingent for South Africa. The British reverses at the seat of war has stirred the depths of the Empire, the impulse being scarcely less strong at the extremities than at the centre of power. The Canadian Government practically risks nothing in anticipating the consent of Parliament, a consent which, on strict constitutional grounds, must be considered a pre-requisite. The two great political parties are agreed that Canada only does her duty by taking part in the defence of a distant part of the Empire, which a hostile force had invaded. The leader of the Opposition was urgent in demanding that assistance should be sent to the invaded British colonists of South Africa; and it would be a gracious and a proper thing for the leader of that party in the House of Commons to move a vote of indemnity to the Government for the part which it took in forwarding the contingents. This should be done in the spirit in which the Government were urged to act, as a necessary constitutional reparation which is equally owing by both parties. The second contingent will consist of Mounted Rifles and Artillery, for which officers have been appointed. More infantry are anxious to go, and altogether the number called for is but a fraction of those offering their services. A certain proportion of these will be selected in different parts of the country, the surplus remaining unavailed of and capable of forming a reserve force available if afterwards required. Of the cavalry only good shots and good horsemen will be taken.

The Connors syndicate has received the endorsement of the Government at Ottawa. An order-in-Council has been passed for this purpose. It approves the by-law of the Harbor Commissioners of Montreal and gives that body power to allot to the syndicate certain properties in the harbor for the accommodation of the proposed elevators and the business which they are intended to subserve. The frontage of two of the lots is specified, one being 1,500 feet and the other 1,170 feet; a third parcel is to afford space for at least one large elevator and a freight warehouse. The opposition to the Connors syndicate seems to have entirely collapsed, though a growl about its

concessions is still heard here and there, nobody in Canada having been willing to offer a substitute by which the trade would be better served. If Canadian forwarders had competed but been outbid, it would have been possible to understand the situation, but this surrender without a struggle or an effort is inexplicable. But so it is, and we can only hope that what has been done may turn out for the best. It is impossible not to feel that our own carriers have lost a great opportunity, in the crisis of their business, and that it may never return. The bargain with the Connors syndicate will be for 40 years and renewable. But this loss has been long foreshadowed, by a fatal want of enterprise; and now that the golden opportunity has been allowed to pass, once for all, it is no satisfaction to feel that there will be abundant opportunity for repenting that a higher spirit and greater activity did not actuate our forwarders. To the fatal habit of looking too much to the Government to supply the lack of their own enterprise this, to them, untoward result is but too clearly traceable.

The responsibility of street car managers and conductors will be put to a test in the case of Mrs. Rogers, recently killed by a Church street car. On the strength of the verdict of the coroner's jury Crown Attorney Curry is setting on foot a prosecution, on a charge of manslaughter, of five persons, comprising the manager and the superintendent of the railway company, the motorman who had charge of the car, the city engineer, who has power to regulate the pace of the cars, and Kinsella, the driver of the cab in which the victim was riding. The coroner's jury said the motorman did his duty, but it is now alleged that he ran the car at too high a rate of speed. No less than three of the five to be indicted will have to share the responsibility of alleged excess of speed: the city engineer, who could have regulated it, the superintendent, who is assumed to have arranged the time-table, and the motorman, who was required to make certain time, but whom the law does not authorize to risk the lives of persons in the cars or the streets.

Individual critics of the action of the Government in contributing to the defence of the Empire are occasionally heard, but the voice has a distant and unsympathetic sound. A second member of Parliament, Mr. Monet, objects to the sending of these contingents, on grounds which are quite illogical. "My ideal," says Mr. Monet, "is to see Canada take rank among the independent nations as soon as it will be sufficiently developed by the vitality of its population and the immensity of its resources." But even so, the question is not of the distant and uncertain future, but of our present duty. We are a part of the British Empire and we owe something to the common defence, of which we are ourselves, not less than South Africa, liable to feel the need. The attitude of Mr. Monet is not, fortunately, that of race; for although of French origin, he says he would take the same ground if Canada were a French colony. He states that if twenty-five electors, Liberal or Conservative, will ask him to resign on account of his opinions he will do so. He makes the thing so easy that he may possibly get the call; though what object there would be in making a commotion, even in a single constituency, it is difficult to see. The urgency of the case he, of course, declines to admit, and without such admission, the sending of the contingents does not come under the exceptions which cover certain unappropriated expenditures. But his objection is deeper than to the unauthorized appropriation; it goes to the entire action. Well, he is entitled to his opinion, but he