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TORONTO, FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 1900.

THE SITUATION.

Lord Roberts entered Bloemfontein on Tuesday, the keys of the presidency and the public offices having previously been taken to him, two miles before he reached the town, being borne by the Mayor, the Secretary of the late Government, the Landrost and other officials. The entry was in the nature of a triumphal procession. The British flag was promptly hoisted on the Presidential building, evacuated by Mr. Steyn on Monday night. The Landrost, though he was officially a member of the Government, was the opponent of the "late" President, as Lord Roberts styles him. No better proof that the Free Staters are tired of the war could be given than the reception of General Roberts. After the failure of the two Presidents to induce Lord Salisbury to negotiate with a condition precedent that the independence of the Boer Republics should be granted, and that the rebels of Cape Colony should not be punished, these officials declared that there was nothing for it but to continue the fight; they asked President McKinley to intervene, and sent a deputation to Europe with a like commission. Lord Salisbury declined to accept the intervention of any nation.

President Kruger and President Steyn, of the two South African Republics, who last autumn defiantly challenged Great Britain to mortal combat, suddenly, at Bloemfontein, March 5, became impressed with the horror of the war they have been waging, and asked themselves whether there was any justification for all the misery that had been caused. When they first experienced this change of mind they do not tell us, but they virtually ask credit for the statement that it was not caused by the near approach of General Roberts of the British army to the capital in which they penned their epistle. They declare themselves ready to negotiate for peace, on condition that they are guaranteed the independence of the two Republics, civil and military, which would enable them to continue to trample on the outlandish British in the Transvaal, and to enter another war whenever it would suit their purpose to do so. This is the meaning of their offer; these are their terms, and

they add that they will take nothing less. They might, they tell us, have made this offer before, but as the British, who were struck before they were prepared to defend themselves, had met defeats, they (the Boers) abstained out of pure tenderness for British prestige. This was considerate, or rather it would have been if it had been true. To this amazing proposal, Lord Salisbury gave the only reply possible, under the circumstances. Recounting the events which preceded the invasion of British territory by the Boers, he tells them in plain language that Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to assent to the independence, either of the South African Republic or the Orange Free State. This determination receives the hearty endorsement of the whole British Empire.

At Ottawa, on Tuesday, on a motion to go into supply, M. Bourassa moved an amendment containing three points: The independence of Parliament, supposed to be menaced by sending two contingents to Africa without Parliamentary authority; that the action of the Government, in furnishing the aid it sent, should not be drawn into a precedent; opposition to a change in the political and military relations of Canada to Great Britain, unless initiated "by the sovereign will of Parliament." On the main point—the necessity of Parliamentary sanction in advance—practically everybody agrees with him. In every other colony, he pointed out, Parliament was called before the expense was incurred. Here it was known in advance that all parties stood ready to condone the irregularity; and the proof is found in the fact that M. Bourassa got only ten votes for his motion. Moving it, as he did, as an amendment to a motion to go into supply, he may be said to have courted defeat, which he was doomed to meet in any case, but the effect of his tactics was to make the defeat the more crushing. One clause of the resolution seems to be due to a statement, which M. Bourassa says the Governor-General made—not wisely, we think, if he did make it—that he does not like a written constitution. Then we are told that Mr. Chamberlain accepted offers of troops from Canada "which had not been made;" which means, we must suppose, not made in a regular constitutional way; that they were made, in some form, may be taken for granted.

In reply to M. Bourassa, the Premier struck a note which has resounded clear and loud throughout the whole extent of the British Empire. He pointed out that, owing to the time and manner in which his motion was made, there was nothing to do but for the House to swallow the whole or to reject the whole. No amendment to the amendment could be offered; if there could, he thought, the amendment might have been so modified as to secure its unanimous adoption; the Government had made it plain, when the first contingent was sent, that the act was not to be made a precedent. Todd was quoted to show that "if it were possible to do so, it would not be politic to restrain the Government from expending money, under any circumstances, without the previous authority of Parliament." The main thing was that the Government felt that they were sustained by public opinion, and took the responsibility, as well they might, relying on Parliamentary indemnity. If the Government had refused to send troops to Africa, the calamity of a cleavage, on race lines, he said, would have happened. And he used these confident words: "What-