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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 1899.

THE SITUATION.

A commercial treaty has been concluded between the United States and Great Britain, in which the colony of Barbadoes is specially concerned. The United States agrees to admit, on favorable terms, the sugar of Barbadoes, in return for a reduction of duties on certain articles of their own produce. The colony had previously asked England to put duties on bounty-fed sugar, with which it is otherwise unable to compete. To this, public sentiment in England would not agree. The facility with which the treaty has been passed, shows how much more speedily trained diplomats move than men who are new to the art. This is probably but the beginning of a series of similar treaties for the British West Indies, which, time out of mind, have sighed for better access to the American market.

There must be something defective in the municipal management of Montreal, when it is necessary to put forth a three million loan at four per cent. The mode of making the loan has been subject of various suggestions, and a compromise was come to; a small amount will be tried as a popular loan, the rest will go to banks and brokers.

A question of carrying on public work without public tenders and contracts, raised in Parliament, was ingeniously turned into an alternative between public works, carried on by day labor, and works awarded under competition to the lowest bidder. The labor unions favor day labor in such works, and the Minister of Public Works probably had this fact prominent in his mind. He said a great deal in favor of day labor on public works, and predicted that under whatever Government there will be a good deal of it in future. Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out that, under the law, the rule is that public works must be done by contract, "except in cases of emergency, or in which, from the nature of the work, it can be more expeditiously and economically done by the officers of the department." The complaint on which the discussion

arose hardly called for the distinction between the two classes of work. If there be cases in which no certain ground on which to base a tender can be got, day labor solves the difficulty; but if day labor is employed, the superintendents should also be men simply paid for their work, and not at liberty to buy materials at one price, and sell them to the Government at another.

Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner, reports, in a vigorous strain, the condition of affairs in the Transvaal. "A certain section of the press in the Transvaal," he says, "preaches openly and constantly the doctrine of a republic embracing all South Africa, and supports it by menacing references to the arguments of the Transvaal, its alliance with the Orange Free State, and the active sympathy which, in case of war, it would receive from a large section of Her Majesty's subjects." This sort of talk is at least brutally candid; and, it may be admitted, is preferable to secret plotting in the dark. Of course there is in this loud talk a certain element of swagger and brag. The danger of the situation which it discloses is in precise proportion to the means which the Boers possess of making good their threats. The Orange Free State may not be so sure an ally of the Transvaal as the braggarts pretend; and most of the Boers in the British provinces would probably refuse to commit their fortunes to so desperate a measure as the overthrow of British power in South Africa.

At the conference of Bloemfontein, Mr. Milner asked that the Transvaal should grant full franchise to every foreigner of good character and possessing a certain property qualification, who had been resident five years in the republic, and who declared his intention to reside there permanently. Of course he would have to make a complete change of citizenship, for no man can be a citizen of two countries at the same time. To this proposal President Kruger replied that it, in effect, asked him to hand over his country to foreigners. He made a counter proposal, under which, Mr. Milner remarked, that "no man, not already naturalized, even if he had been in the country thirteen or fourteen years, would get a vote for the first Volksraad, in less than two and a half years from the passing of the new law; no considerable number of people would obtain the right to vote in less than five years." There would under this scheme, be a long interval of years during which a man would have to renounce his old citizenship before he came into enjoyment of the new. Nearly such an experience as that before the Transvaal Canada has herself gone through; at that time, Upper Canada was afraid to give free scope to the naturalization of Americans; in Lower Canada the British population were afraid to fall under the dominion of a French majority, which prevailed in the elective chamber, and looked for their protection to the anomalous contrivance of a nominated Upper House. The perplexities of that period are happily forgotten by the present generation of Canadians.

Two deputations, chiefly from Toronto, waited on the Ottawa Government to ask subsidies for two railways—the usual subsidy, as Mr. W. B. McMurich, speaking for the road, blandly put it—the Nipissing and James' Bay line and the James' Bay Railway