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**Trouble in the Transvaal** A startling episode in connection with the affairs of the Transvaal was the arrest on Tuesday last at Johannesburg, the great mining town of the Boer Republic, of eight men, alleged to be former British officers, on a charge of high treason against President Kruger's government. The prisoners were taken by special train to Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, and there lodged in jail. According to the account of the affair furnished by despatches from Pretoria, the arrests were effected by a detective who joined a movement which had been formed in Johannesburg for the purpose of enrolling men in order to cause an outbreak of rebellion. It is said that incriminating documents were found upon the prisoners and that other arrests will probably be made. This news has naturally created great excitement in Cape Colony and throughout South Africa, and has produced no small sensation in London, where there is much speculation as to the significance of the arrests. Mr. Cecil Rhodes disclaims all knowledge of the matter, and Mr. Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, states that no information had reached him from South Africa which would explain or lead him to anticipate the arrests. It is charged against the men who are now the prisoners of the Boer Government that they were secretly engaged in enlisting men for the purpose of rebellion when they were ready to give the signal, and that the enlistment roster included 2,000 men. While 'The Times' and other London papers seem disposed to minimize the importance of the affair and to regard the persons arrested as representing only an insignificant party among the rougher element of the Uitlanders at Johannesburg, there seems to be grounds for apprehension that the matter is more serious. The feeling on the part of the Uitlanders against what is regarded as the injustice of Boer rule is intense. President Kruger has been apprehensive that the situation would lead to war with Great Britain, to whom the Uitlanders look for protection. He has accordingly greatly strengthened the defences of the country and made extensive preparations for war, and it is far from improbable that the Uitlanders have also secretly attempted, as far as possible, to put themselves in a condition of readiness to take part in a struggle for liberty. If the leading factors of the Uitlander population are concerned in this matter which has led to the arrests, they would seem to have played into the hands of the Boer Government and to have furnished President Kruger with another argument like that of the Jameson Raid to justify him in withholding from the Uitlanders the rights and privileges of citizenship. [Later despatches say that the men arrested have no standing as British officers and that the affair is not considered by President Kruger as sufficiently serious to interfere with the friendly relations existing between his Government and that of Great Britain.]

**France.** The relations of Great Britain and France, though less strained than they were a few months ago, can hardly yet be said to be cordial. A matter which threatens international complications has risen in the far East in connection with the attempted extension of French authority over the Kingdom of Siam. It appears that in France there continues to be strong popular feeling against Great Britain. "Never, during the long years that I have been in France," says the Paris correspondent of the 'New York Times,' "has the question of a possible invasion of England been more seriously agitated than it is today. The latest discovery of the French Chauvinists is that Dunkirk is the port from which the next expedition against

England might most effectively set sail. And the public has been appealed to by the 'Petit Journal' to bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the government to provide for new fortifications at Dunkirk and an enlargement of its harbor. The most competent English generals readily agree that English shores are by no means impregnable and that the landing of a hostile army might quite possibly be effected. There is a conviction, however, shared by many people both in and out of France, that the French have hopelessly ceased to be a military race and that the spirit of Napoleon is as dead in them as that of Don Quixote or the Cid in Spain." The moral effect of the Dreyfus case, this correspondent thinks, is to convince intelligent Frenchmen that armies are antiquated organizations and must henceforward be in secret opposition to the spirit of any modern nation. This is particularly the case with armies which are not engaged in active military operations. "The role of the soldier is an active one. He degenerates in time of peace. He ferments as it were and the result is corruption." A good many people think that an army is doing the devil's work when it is engaged in war. However that may be, it seems certain that Satan has found a good deal of mischief for the idle officers of the French army to do in time of peace. "The influence of an inactive army upon France has certainly been deplorable, for it has forced her out of the social and political role which she has sought to play ever since the Revolution. Instead of being the champion of truth, she sits at the feet of Caiaphas. She has dragged the banner of liberty at the feet of a Russian autocrat. She is the one free country in the world which still fosters imperial ambitions. Her punishment is the series of her self-deceptions and disillusionments. She thought that the whole world loved and applauded her. And even Russia, her natural ally, is beginning to treat her friendship as a negligible quantity. The recent convention between Russia and England with respect to China is one of the severest blows to her amour propre which France has received for a long time, and perhaps that is why she says so little about it."

**Newfoundland.** The Newfoundland Legislature is now in session. The references in the speech from the Throne to the industries of the colony indicate a fairly prosperous condition of affairs. The fisheries as a whole appear to have been more than usually remunerative during the past year. The herring fishery was especially good, and the cod and lobster fisheries have yielded fair returns, while the seal fishery has been excellent. The volume of business for the present year accordingly promises to be unusually large. Newfoundland possesses considerable forest wealth, which is attracting capital from outside the colony. The government is giving attention to agriculture with a view to obtaining information as to the agricultural resources of the island and giving encouragement to that industry. Renewed activity is expected in mining. The settlement of the French Shore difficulty, which has been for a long time a cause of exasperation to the people of Newfoundland and has interfered seriously with the prosecution of the fisheries upon their own coasts and other interests of the colony, is anticipated as near at hand, and the expectation that this long-standing grievance is to be removed, together with the present favorable conditions of trade and commerce, creates a general spirit of hopefulness which is reflected in the Governor's speech.

**Immigration.** The report of the Department of the Interior shows that sales of homesteads in the North-west have increased largely. In 1897 the number of homestead entries was 2,384, the number of acres sold 381,440, and the total num-

ber of sales 22,336. In 1898 the number of entries was 4,848, the number of acres disposed of 775,680, and the total number of sales 48,186. The number of homestead entries granted during the past year is the largest since 1883; it is over twice as large as the number granted in 1897, and over three times that of 1887. While there were 1,707 entries cancelled in 1892 and 1,294 in 1893, the number of cancellations has fallen this year to 155. This would appear to be a very good indication that the number of persons who formerly took up the land for other than farming purposes is gradually growing less, and that those now making entries are bona fide farmers, who intend to earn the title to their holdings by actual settlement and the performance of the duties prescribed. Similar results are to be seen in the statement of land sales by railway companies having Government lands, and by the Hudson Bay Company. In 1897 the number of acres sold by these organizations was 222,545, and the amount paid \$719,336, while in 1898 these figures increased to 473,789 and \$1,354,908. Highly favorable mention is made of the Doukhobor immigrants. Their physique and general appearance indicate a people well adapted to the conditions which they will find in the Canadian North-west. They are described as skilled agriculturists as well as thrifty and moral in character, and their coming to this country as pioneer settlers of its new lands is considered a matter for congratulation. The report makes mention of the Galician immigrants and speaks highly of the progress they have made since their arrival in Manitoba. They are comfortably housed, and the great majority seem to be in every way able to care for themselves, while there is every indication that before long they will prove to be successful farmers. As a result of the efforts of Mr. C. R. Devlin, Immigration Commissioner for Ireland, a considerable number of immigrants are expected during the year from the Emerald Isle.

**Redistribution.** The Redistribution Bill foreshadowed in the speech from the Throne at the opening of the Dominion Parliament is now before the House of Commons, having been introduced by Sir Wilfrid Laurier on Friday. This seems to indicate that the Government takes no stock in the popular superstition that Friday is an unlucky day for the launching of an important enterprise, for it is well understood that the tug of war for the session will come in connection with this Redistribution Bill. The measure is described by the Conservatives as a most infamous gerrymander, while the Liberals declare that it is intended simply to correct gerrymanders effected in 1882 and 1892 by the Conservatives. On the part of the present Government it is asserted that the Government led by Sir John Macdonald took unwarrantable liberties with the constituencies, disregarding municipal boundaries and cutting and carving constituencies, especially in Western Ontario, with a view to secure party advantage. The Conservatives, of course, deny the truth of these allegations. The present bill will affect principally Ontario. Few changes are proposed for Quebec, New Brunswick and P. E. Island, and none at all for Nova Scotia. To get at the history of redistribution legislation in Canada and its bearing upon the question of justice between the rival political parties would involve much study and enquiry. So far as regards the principle of redistribution two things seem evident. First, a gerrymander—that is any alteration of the bounds of electoral districts with the purpose of giving one political party an undue advantage over the other—is a political iniquity of the most flagrant character, entirely opposed to justice and liberty. Secondly, the alteration of the bounds of electoral divisions, when such change is necessary, should not take place under partisan auspices. It should not lie within the constitutional power of a party to cut and carve constituencies to suit its own ends and interests. Moreover, it is very evident that the gerrymander is a game which more than one party can play at. If a party adopts it as a convenient and effective weapon against their enemies, they may expect in turn to have it turned against themselves, and the result will be that, with every change of government we shall have a fresh gerrymander.