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THE SITUATION.

Some missionary work on the Free Trade question is being done by Mr. Laurier in a political tour through Ontario. At one of his meetings he took the ground that the National Policy is "vicious from the top to bottom, and, in order to reform it, it must be uprooted, tree, trunk and branch." On his side he makes the issue plain. What will be the ultimate shape of the Government policy on this question, it would be too soon to pronounce, if the enquiry which has been going on is to have any decisive influence on the event. The public has been given to understand that the spirit of the National Policy will be adhered to, while tariff changes in detail are made. Something, too, it has been intimated, will depend upon the extent of the reversal of the protection policy by the Democratic party. According to present appearances, there is reason to anticipate a decided change in the tariff policy of the United States. Through this means something in the way of reciprocal concession may become a duty, though no question of a treaty should arise. If one country acts liberally the other will naturally feel a disposition to legislate in a similar spirit. It is clear from the professions of both parties in Canada that some change in the National Policy, in the form of lowering the tariff, will take place; to what extent it will go will depend in some measure on which party will have the work in hand. The first innings is marked for the present ruling party.

A proposal has been made that emigrants who arrive in Canada and pass on to the United States shall enter the Republic only at certain designated points. The object is to enable the American Government to exercise due surveillance over immigrants, to be in a position to reject paupers and others who may be undesirable, and to collect the head tax in a regu-

lar and certain way. This the Americans desire to do by examining the immigrants in Canada. What would become of the rejected immigrants? If undesirable for the Republic, they can scarcely be welcome to Canada, though the conditions of acceptability are not necessarily the same in the two countries. The United States has got nearly all the emigrants for which it has need, while Canada has a vast extent of virgin soil to be brought under cultivation. Unhealthy immigrants are not desirable for us any more than for our neighbors; the mere want of money cannot reasonably constitute pauperism, if the new comers are able and willing to work. It is desirable of course that they should not be made a charge on the public, and care will have to be taken to prevent the possibility of this occurring on an extensive scale. The Ottawa Government does not see its way to recognizing officially the right of Americans to inspect immigrants in Canada.

In British Columbia the sealers, whose avocation is carried on in Behring Sea, allege that the new sealing regulations will prove ruinous to their interests. They propose to present a memorial asking the British Government to buy their schooners and outfits, at a reasonable figure. There are, no doubt, too many of them in the business consistent with the maintenance of the seals at their average past numbers; and, in any case, a reduction in the number of vessels would have been necessary as the alternative of carrying destruction so far as greatly to reduce the number of roving seals. Some of the vessels ought, in reason, to have gone out of the business, even in the absence of the new regulations. The proposal to sell all the vessels is made probably in the full belief that it will not be accepted; if it were accepted, some owners would be glad, others would not part with their property without regret. No complaint of the regulations can, of course, prevent their going into effect, and it is useless to do anything in the expectation that the work of the Paris Conference will be undone. In all probability some of the Canadian sealing vessels will go out of the business and others will pursue their calling as before. The experiment of the profitability of the business is sure to be made. Mr. Boscowitz, a fur dealer of Victoria, has published a letter in which he states that the sealers are at heart pleased with the outcome of the arbitration. Their sincerity in the position they have taken before the public being thus attacked, it will be interesting to hear what they have to say in reply.

On the cattle restriction question neither the British nor the Canadian Government has shown a disposition to do what the other asks. The British Government declines the invitation to send experts to Canada to test the healthiness of cattle on their home ground, while it speaks as if the Canadian Government has refused to send to England the reports showing on what grounds cattle offered for shipment at Montreal had been rejected. It is difficult to see why the latter information could be

refused. If it were produced, one practical step in the attempt to see the matter from a common standpoint would have been made. If the British Government sent experts to Canada, the whole ground of the dispute, for the facts are in dispute, would be covered. But as nothing is done on either side, no progress is made. Mr. Gardiner, secretary of the Board of Agriculture, says that the reason why he cannot raise the embargo against Canadian cattle is that he is bound by the report of three eminent veterinary experts, and in absolute ignorance of all technical points, he cannot decide against their conclusion. This puts an end to all present hope of admission of Canadian cattle for any other purpose than that of immediate slaughter.

Among the expedients resorted to in the neighboring Republic to invent new or extend old forms of credit is the certified cheque, intended to pass from hand to hand as currency. The question whether such cheques were liable to the ten per cent. tax payable on State bank notes, came before the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Bureau, by whom it was referred to the solicitor of the department. A decision was found that, where an endorsement of the cheque was necessary, the cheque was not liable to the tax; and Solicitor Reeve concludes that the converse of the proposition is true, that where endorsement is not required the tax is payable. A circular has accordingly been issued from the Internal Revenue Bureau intended to put an end to the circulation of certified cheques, by declaring them taxable and causing enquiry to be made of the amount issued. Fortunately the necessity for certified cheques as currency has passed away several days ago.

A new device for halting and robbing an express train has been successfully put into operation on the Lake Shore Road, within 140 miles of Chicago. The robbers, twenty in number, got off with \$30,000 in gold from an express car. The safe was blown open by dynamite. Several shots were fired by the marauders and the engineer was killed. A scheme that worked so successfully is likely to be repeated, and the question arises how railways can protect themselves against such assaults. It is marvellous that there should be such a question in the United States to-day.

The revenue of the Dominion for the year 1892-3 was \$38,131,701, being an increase of more than two millions over the previous year. Of the increase, less than a quarter—\$452,000—was from customs. According to the Government book-keeping, there has been a surplus every year since 1888. It consists of ordinary revenue over ordinary expenditure. Last year it was \$1,386,579. Properly speaking, since it is regularly expended, it is not a surplus, but a portion of the revenue which goes to permanent expenditure. One year, before the sugar duties were largely sacrificed, the so-called surplus was nearly four millions, \$3,885,893. Whatever it is, this surplus, on the present scale of expenditure, can be sacrificed by a reduction of the tariff, without creating a deficiency of revenue. The